Digitized by the Internet Archive in 2023 with funding from University of Toronto









Nº 147

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

No. 147

First Session, 41st Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 8 March 2016

GRAPI.

Mardi 8 mars 2016

des débats

(Hansard)

Assemblée législative

Première session, 41^e législature

de l'Ontario

Journal

Speaker Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building 111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430 Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario





Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement 111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430 Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY **OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 8 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Wednesday, March 23, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday, March 24, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the fol-

lowing with regard to Bill 173:

-Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

That the deadline for requests to appear be 1 p.m.

on Thursday, March 17, 2016; and

That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; and

-That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m.

on Thursday, March 24, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 6, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday, April 7, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Thursday, April 7, 2016, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a);

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, April 11, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House: and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be de-

ferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: A point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to congratulate the government House leader on the birth of his lovely daughter, Elliana, and welcome him back to the House.

I can see that Jim Bradley trained him well: First day back, time allocation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That's not a point of order; however, it's a nice gesture on your part to recognize a new birth to our government House leader.

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion 63.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense.

Back to the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I do want to thank the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his kind remarks,

and I want to thank all the members of the House for their kind wishes to myself and Christine on the birth of our daughter, Elliana Shirley Sanam Naqvi.

Elliana was born on February 19 at the Ottawa Civic Hospital in the great riding of Ottawa Centre at 1:17 p.m. She is, if you will indulge me in saying, absolutely gorgeous—I love my daughter. Elliana is doing great, and Christine is recovering very well, as well. Rafi, our almost four-year-old son is in love with his sister, Elli. There's an incredible bond that is being developed between the two. It was an amazing two weeks to be home with the family—with Rafi, Elli and Christine. It was tough to leave the family at home this morning to be here with all of you, my good friends.

I do want to take a moment to speak on this important motion. I had the opportunity to view the budget from home on the parliamentary channel around 1 o'clock in the morning when I was looking after my daughter—that was a perfect time to watch the speech. I felt very strongly that the bill associated with the budget is an important piece of legislation. It really continues with the government's plan to create jobs and grow our economy in Ontario.

As you know, we previously committed to investing more than \$134 billion over 10 years in priority projects such as roads and bridges, public transit, hospitals and schools. We are building on this plan; we are building Ontario up with an additional \$3-billion commitment, bringing the government's total infrastructure investment to more than \$137 billion over the next 10 years. That is an unprecedented investment in our communities in every single part of our province, to make sure we are building a province that is modern and ready for 21st-century challenges.

That kind of investment will result in about \$160 billion over 12 years starting in 2014-15, which, as I said, is the largest-ever investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history. These planned investments will support, on average, more than 110,000 jobs each year, again benefiting people in all our respective communities across the province.

In the 2016 budget, our government is proposing to modernize student financial assistance to make post-secondary education more accessible and affordable. Speaker, this is an important element. I have the great honour of representing Carleton University, as part of Ottawa Centre, where I speak to students all the time, and I can tell you that following the budget, there has been wide support for this important initiative that was announced in the budget. Under the proposed system, average tuition will be free for students with financial need from families with incomes of \$50,000 or lower.

0910

These are just a few of the changes proposed in Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act (Budget Measures), 2016. This bill continues the government's plan to build Ontario up and deliver on its number one priority, which is growing the economy and creating jobs across the province. This bill ensures that we continue to

build Ontario up by investing in our future. It is important that we move forward with Bill 173 and bring it before the committee. In the last Parliament, this Legislature was ground to a halt and was unable to move forward on a lot of important bills, such as budget bills. Only 39% of government bills were passed in the last minority government; that's compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990.

Voters of Ontario have sent us a clear message in 2014: They want our government, the legislators, to get on with the business of governing in their best interests. It is time that we end second reading and refer the bill to the committee. In committee, stakeholders will present their views, members of the communities will have an opportunity to contribute further to the bill and we will be able to hear directly from the public on their thoughts about this important piece of legislation. In committee, members will also have an opportunity to move amendments to the bill, which is an important part of the process of our parliamentary democracy.

At the same time, this House can move to substantive debate on other important matters that are also before the House. There are a number of important pieces of legislation that have already been introduced which the government would like to debate in the House and move through the legislative process. I'll give you three examples: Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act; Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act; and Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, another very important piece of legislation.

We would like to spend time debating some of these other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but we cannot until Bill 173 is dealt with. Therefore, I very much urge all members in this House to support this motion and Bill 173 and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before I recognize the official opposition for further debate, I just want to make one point clear: The votes on second and third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and that, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this time allocation motion. This is something that we've seen, literally, time and time again from the Liberal government. They say one thing, but they really mean the exact opposite. They say they want to be open and transparent, but shutting off debate about this budget is exactly the opposite of that, so why would they want to do that? It's because life just got more unaffordable for everybody in the province of Ontario, and this government wants to limit the amount of time that we here in the Legislature can talk about this. That's the purpose of what they're doing; let's make that very clear. They do not want us standing here, in the Legislature, to put a microscope on this budget and be able to talk about the things that have indeed made life more expensive here in Ontario.

The tax credits that had helped children, students, seniors and families are being eliminated. In fact, the vast majority of seniors will see the price of their prescription drugs double; 92% of seniors will see their prescription price double. That's just a fact; it's an indisputable fact.

Speaker, we also have very serious concerns about anything this government tells us. They have lost all credibility, and I'll go through some of the reasons why that has happened. The budget has now confirmed that the government is indeed using one-time money from the sale of Hydro, as well as contingency funds, to make their deficit appear smaller. Only a couple of months ago, they were bragging that the deficit forecast went from \$8.5 billion to \$7.5 billion. But if you look at page 100 in the fall economic statement, it tells you how. They used sale of Hydro money and plunked that into revenue. It's one-time money; it's not going to happen again and again and again. That tells us we have a structural deficit in the province. It means that our spending is higher than the money we take in. If you bring in one-time money to appear to balance, that solves the dilemma that day but not the issue that spending is higher than revenue.

In a couple of years, after this one-time revenue runs out-of course, a couple of years brings us just to the 2018 election, when the one-time revenue will run outyou are going to see an all-out assault on our budget, Speaker. You are going to see a deficit balloon all over again, because it has been masked. In fact, the Financial Accountability Officer referred to the Liberal budget as vague and uncertain. He went on to say, "Maintaining balanced budgets beyond 2017-18 will likely prove challenging." Why? Again, they are using one-time money. By that we mean from the sale of assets: the sale of Hydro One, the sale of LCBO headquarters and quite possibly the sale of 250 LCBO stores, unless we thwarted it yesterday, and the sale of the OPG headquarters across the street. Those are one-time assets that are going to be sold by this government.

Bank of Montreal BMO Capital Markets described it this way: "Asset sales of \$5.7 billion ... are one-time in nature, and don't address any underlying structural deficit." Speaker, that sounds kind of familiar. We've been saying that on this side of the aisle for two years, and now we have not only the Financial Accountability Officer coming out and acknowledging that but we have BMO Capital Markets using almost the exact wording

that we have been using here for two years.

Further, Speaker, Bryne Purchase, Ontario's former chief economist and deputy minister at many ministries, stated, "The added revenue from cap-and-trade and the Hydro One sale helped to make the provincial numbers look better." Everyone understands; we've all seen through this charade now. We understand what they're doing: They're taking one-time sales and propping up their revenue number. This is fake math; it's voodoo math, and it's a shell game with taxpayers' money. That's the biggest part of what they don't want us standing here talking about. That's why they're time-allocating this: to get us out of here and not let us talk anymore about this budget and what it's doing to families.

Let me take a few minutes, Speaker, and tell you what it's doing to families, because life is getting more expensive for the people of Ontario, thanks to this 2016 budget. Of course you've got the obligatory sin taxes on alcohol and tobacco; they're going up. Wine prices will increase by 4%, and there will be a minimum price put on alcoholic ciders. The government talks about increased availability of wine, but their plan won't be fully implemented for nine years—except the price goes up today.

When we talk about cap-and-trade, that's something they really don't want to hear. I want to stop for a moment and commend our member from Huron—Bruce, who has done an exceptional job on this cap-and-trade file. She has shown us exactly what is going to happen to the pocketbooks of those in Ontario and what won't be happening to the greenhouse gas emissions, thanks to this Liberal design of cap-and-trade. So I thank you very, very much.

0920

Look, climate change is a very serious challenge; nobody is going to argue that. The government needs a credible plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but you've also got to protect taxpayers and our economy. What we've seen now is that this government is taking advantage. They're preying on the goodwill the people of Ontario have towards climate change. We want to see something done. This government is preying on that goodwill and using it as a tax grab. We've seen that from all of the financial services, who have said that this capand-trade is one time.

You would have heard the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change stand up and say, "No, no. It's protected by law. That money must go into"—X projects. Well, if you look at the projects—and it's interesting: They did exactly the same thing with Hydro One. They told us that the money had to go specifically into transit and infrastructure, and ostensibly, it did. It went into transit and infrastructure, but that money was already budgeted. So they took the already budgeted money out of the bottom end of that and used it to lower their deficit. The transit and infrastructure fund did not change with that influx of money from Hydro One. It didn't change the amount they spent. They just took that money and used it to artificially lower their deficit.

Now they're doing exactly the same thing with the cap-and-trade money. They talk about how it must be used for the various projects. Transit is one of them. So here we go again. They're going to put that cap-and-trade money—now, we're talking big money here, Speaker. This is \$1.9 billion annually. We're talking about putting that money, yes, into transit. They'll tie a green ribbon around every project you can imagine and say, "This was thanks to the cap-and-trade money." But all that money that was already budgeted, they'll be carving that out of the bottom and stuffing it into the deficit. That's exactly how they plan to lower the deficit, and it's all imaginary, Speaker. There's nothing new to be done about climate change with their budget. It's a shame, and it's a sham. I want that very, very clear.

This \$1.9 billion will raise the price of gasoline 4.3 cents a litre, and that's before tax, of course. You'll be paying about \$400 a year, Speaker, in new gasoline taxes at the pump. Natural gas: The experts tell us that in only a few years from now, this will add about \$475 to the average family's natural gas bill, once this program is up and running. This is already on top of the skyrocketing hydro bills that families we all hear from just cannot afford to pay.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You're right. It's about a \$1,000 hit, just on those items alone, from cap-and-trade.

The Premier, before the budget, said, "Oh, great news coming in the budget: We're going to help you lower your hydro bills." It was insulting to read just about the only line in that almost-400-page budget, the only line about the seniors and families who cannot afford their hydro bills. The only line was: "We've got something for you. From cap-and-trade, we're going to give you \$2 a month off your hydro bill." Well, thank you very much, considering that in January alone your hydro bill went up \$100. So thanks for the toonie, but you're not solving the problem.

There are families in Ontario—and these members here on the Liberal side were with us as we sat in the prebudget hearing in Ottawa last year, and we heard from Jennifer, who said that because her hydro bill is so high, she has to decide whether to heat or eat.

That is the Ontario that this Liberal Party has created. That is the Ontario that is seeing all aspects deteriorating, from businesses to the families who cannot afford to pay their bills. This budget is an assault on families, students, seniors and children.

Here's an example: seniors' drug costs. According to Kathleen Wynne, if you're a wealthy senior who earns more than \$19,300—if you're that wealthy—you can now afford to have the cost of your drugs double. The ODB, the drug benefit, will go from \$100 to \$170 and for every prescription they get they have to pay an additional dollar. That's double. That's the assault that this government is putting on seniors.

If you participated in the home renovation tax credit if you needed a wheelchair ramp, if you needed other things to help you in your home—that's all gone now. They didn't mention that in the budget speech. The budget speech was all aspiration but no operation.

This is what's happening on the ground: Families are struggling. If you have kids, you would have used the children's activity tax credit. That's to help your kids with soccer, hockey, and all of the sports and activities. That was a great tax credit, which is gone today. This is an assault on children and their parents. This is an assault on students, an assault on seniors and it's an assault on families.

If you wanted to enjoy hiking, camping, hunting or fishing, or decided to get a liquor licence, an event permit or a court application, every single one of those, despite what we've heard from the Minister of Natural Resources over and over, where he continues to either not understand his file or never to have read the budget—pages 190 and 191 are very clear. They tell us that service fees are going up, and they list all the fees, including hunting and fishing licences and parks. It's very clear, and this minister and this government keep denying that that occurred.

Pages 190 and 191 appeared in my budget. I don't know why they can't see it in their budget. There's something really wrong when the government not only does this to the taxpayers of Ontario—puts this punitive financial strain on them—but then denies it as well. That's more heinous.

I want to have some fun with numbers. I like numbers; I enjoy that. I've said earlier, we have a structural deficit in Ontario and it's masked by all of these one-time supplements. The government's revenue projections for 2017-18 are \$4 billion higher than the Financial Accountability Officer's best-case scenario for Ontario. In the fall, he came out with a report and he said, "If all of our revenues magically hit this number here and our expenses magically are reduced to this number here, we're still going to have a deficit of \$3.5 billion in 2017-18." That's what he told this Legislature. Yet somehow this government has propped up the revenues and made that deficit appear that it's going to disappear.

I trust the Financial Accountability Officer and his staff; I trust their numbers. They've got a book they put out that shows how they got to that. The best-case scenario says we cannot balance. If everything goes perfectly, we cannot balance. Those are his numbers. Yet the government's numbers—of course, when you just pluck numbers from thin air and you pluck in these revenue numbers that they've made up, that's the problem. They've used these one-time revenues.

A couple of other things the government did this year to artificially reduce their deficit: They removed \$850 million from the contingency fund. That's always a great way to appear to balance. They applied—this is my favourite. Just think about it, Speaker. In the fall the government came out with a budget—remember, I said earlier that they dropped their deficit from an \$8.5-billion forecast to \$7.5 billion? Magically, only a couple of months later, they came in at \$5.7 billion and patted themselves on the back.

What they failed to tell all of the people of Ontario is that they took a one-time—it's called a departure tax that Hydro had to pay. It's a grant or a payment in lieu of taxes. In the municipal world, the former mayor of Brockville and I would have called that PILT, payment in lieu of taxes.

0930

So they had to come up with a payment because they are no longer going to be a tax-free government-owned agency; they're going to be an independent corporation. They had to pay \$2.6 billion. That's a one-time fee. They're never going to get that tomorrow, the next year or the year after that. They took \$2.6 billion and dropped it into their revenue, into one-time revenue, which magically lowered their deficit forecast from \$7.5 billion

down to \$5.7 billion. It is unbelievable, Speaker, that they would do that, that they would artificially reduce their deficit. That didn't lower the spending. The deficit is still there; it's just artificially masked by this one-time payment. Of course, they also used, to get from \$8.5 billion to \$7.5 billion, the Hydro One sale.

The government says they're on track to balance, but here are some of the things, again, that they forgot to tell

you they've included in the budget:

—Crossing their fingers and maybe their toes, they are planning on getting an extra \$1.8 billion from the federal

government. That's how they plan on balancing.

—Next year, they're going to carve out \$1.9 billion more in personal income tax. I didn't hear the finance minister tell us, "By the way, I'm raising your taxes." He didn't tell us that in his budget, but it's \$1.9 billion in new income taxes. It's in their budget. If you get into the back, past the aspirational stuff, and get into the real facts, you can see where it is.

—They're also forecasting \$500 million in sales tax

increases.

—They are forecasting \$700 million in corporate income tax revenue and, of course, a further \$500 million more than their original forecast from the cr—cap-and-trade. I almost said the same thing as the Premier. Caught myself there.

The debt is projected to be \$308 billion this year. That's up from \$296.1 billion. We are going to add \$12 billion to our debt. Speaker, that means that we are the largest subnational debtor on the entire planet. That's

what we are number one in.

The member from Parry Sound and I are both a couple of northern guys. We like to remember back to the good old days when we were number one. We were the number one mining jurisdiction in the world. Today, we've fallen to number 23. Well, they have replaced it by being the number one debtor in all the world. That's quite an accomplishment.

Debt is going to continue to grow. This budget projects that the debt will grow by \$40 billion by 2018-19.

Forty billion more dollars of debt will be added.

I could go on and on and on, but I think you get the spirit of what I'm speaking about, that this government doesn't want us here talking about this budget, and that's why they are time-allocating this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further

debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have to say how disappointed I am at the government yet again utilizing time allocation.

There are not a lot of members that were here before the days of time allocation. I think there's maybe about five of us that were here at the time, before time allocation was introduced. But governments for over 100 years introduced budgets into this House, introduced all kinds of bills, and didn't need time allocation to move them through the process. The parties would sit down and they would say, "Okay, which bill is it that I want to have more time on, or more committee time?" It was a bit of a back-and-forth between the House leaders to decide

which bills were going to get more committee time and which bills were going to get more time in the House. Those that were non-contentious got through the House pretty quickly.

If you'll notice this order paper that we currently have, there's a bunch of bills that we've all agreed on: the bill in regard to sexual assault, the bill in regard to stress in the workplace. There are all kinds of bills that we, quite frankly, were quite okay with and that we would have been able to limit—not limit, but not have as much debate, in order to have a bit of time in committee. Those bills that were more weighty, more substantive, that really had some issues that we needed to deal with, would have had more time in the House, such as this budget bill, possibly, and certainly when it comes to hearings in committee.

But, no, the government has decided that it knows best. It's going to time-allocate everything from now until the end of the session. It's pretty clear, since we've been back in the spring session, that the government has moved time allocation on almost every bill for the last couple of weeks. I think that is, quite frankly, a disservice to the people of Ontario.

This Legislature is about a couple of things. Aside from the powers that we have as legislators to do what it is that we do, this Legislature is here for members, who were elected by the people to come to this House and express the views of themselves and the people they represent on issues at hand. That's what debate is all about. But it's also for government ministers to listen to that debate, to say, "Okay. Well, you know, that's not a bad point. Maybe when the bill goes into committee, we'll think about having an amendment along that line."

But the big thing, and the most important thing, I think, that this House does is the committee process. That is to allow bills to go into committee, so that the public can have their shot at expressing themselves—either their favour or disfavour—as to any bill before this House. I would argue, up until the time before time allocation but even before the time of this government, the public had more of an opportunity to do so. Now the government has very much limited the amount of time we have at committee, using time allocation. I will argue that even the Conservatives, when they used time allocation in the time that they were in government, allowed more time in committee than this government does.

The process by which committee was structured, as far as who can present, and when you had to apply and how we picked our people who were going to depute, was much more organized under the NDP and the Conservatives utilizing time allocation than this government.

For example, last week, under time allocation, the government brought—the stress one. What is it called again?

Mr. John Vanthof: The PTSD bill.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, the PTSD bill. The government had the PTSD bill. The bill was voted on in the morning, and you had to have applied to stand before the committee to present by 5 o'clock that afternoon. Well, how in heck does that give the opportunity for the public to have any say about what goes on in that bill?

There's a bill where most people were in support, but quite frankly, people wanted to have amendments to the bill and wanted to explain the reasons why. But I think the secret in the way that the government wrote their time allocation motion—and that is related to this one—is that they really didn't want to hear what the public had to say in any real way, because they weren't about to amend the bill, based on what the public wanted.

So it was a bit of a sham, Speaker, that the government used time allocation in such a way that, first of all, it limited the ability for you to apply to get to committee to appear, and then really limited your ability to say something in committee that would have any meaningful outcome when it came to any amendments.

In this particular time allocation motion, the government says, "Oh, well, this thing will be voted on probably today," depending if the government takes any time off the clock, "or tomorrow." The government says, "Oh, well, look at this. You're going to have until next Wednesday"—or Thursday; I think it's Thursday—"next Thursday to be able to apply for application to appear before committee."

The only reason they put next Thursday is that next week is a constituency break, and the committee doesn't sit until the week after. So only by virtue of a constituency break does the public have an extra few days to apply to stand before committee and have their say on this budget, a budget that's going to increase costs to seniors when it comes to drug care; a budget by which we're shifting the way that we run student tuition to where, yes, we make it simple, and some people will benefit at the front end. But there are a lot of people who used to qualify for the tax credits who will no longer get them because they're no longer existent, and they will be losers.

There are all kinds of user fees, as we know. There's more privatization. There's more austerity in this budget than Tim Hudak had in his last election. Let me say that again: Kathleen Wynne in this budget has more austerity than Tim Hudak proposed in the last election, if you really read through this budget.

The public should have the right to have their say. I've got to say, this is not a service to the people of Ontario. A government has to be able to listen to what the people have to say, and the best way to do that in our system of Parliament is to allow committees to sit and for people to be able to come before committee to present.

I propose that what the government should be doing is, first of all, not doing time allocation, but if they're going to time-allocate, at least give the public a week or two—I would argue a couple of weeks—to be able to apply to stand before committee. Because here's the thing: How many people are watching the television broadcast of this debate this morning? I would argue that the majority of Ontarians—I know you'll be surprised, Mr. Speaker—aren't watching this show. They're doing something else. They're probably watching the Republican primaries and the Democrat primaries on CNN or the Justin Trudeau show on the CBC.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, I don't know about that. Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, that's what they do.

In the end, the public is not watching, so they are not going to be aware that the budget's in committee, and they're certainly not going to be aware, the majority, that they have a right to be able to come before committee and be heard. So we're very much limiting the ability of the public to have their say by having time allocation written in the way that it is.

I would argue that if the government is going to timeallocate, there should be at least a couple of weeks so that the public is able to see the advertising, look at it and say, "What's that all about?"; that they're able to figure out how to contact the Clerk and get themselves on a list. It

takes a couple of weeks for that to happen.

I know the government House leader might find this a bit of a surprise, but Ontario is bigger than Toronto. I love Toronto. Toronto is a great city, a world-class city. But you know what? There are other places across this province that are going to be affected by this budget, and will be affected by all kinds of other bills that this government puts through. This government has an opposition to travelling government bills on committee to other communities in the province like no other government I've ever seen before. When the New Democrats were in power, when David Peterson was in power and when Mike Harris was in power, we used to travel our bills government bills—across the province in order to be able to hear what the public had to say so that it wasn't just the view of one group of people in one region of the province. It was travelled to various parts of the province for a reason.

That's the other thing that the government should be doing: allowing bills such as this sufficient time to be able to travel. It doesn't mean to say that it's a tactic to slow the bill down; it's a tactic to give the bill greater hearing so that the government can hear what the public has to say and make any amendments necessary. For example, the government says that they don't think they got the threshold right when it comes to the seniors' drug program. You'd probably learn more listening to people around this province about what the threshold should be if you did travel this bill.

In the little bit of time that I have left, I just have to say that the government should (a) allow more time for people to be able to apply to be on committee, to depute; and (b) allow enough time in committee, more days, so that the public has its say and has the ability to travel to those committees.

The other thing that really needs to be addressed as well is the issue of how we get selected to be on committee. The government says, by way of all their time allocation motions now, first come, first served. You know what? On the surface, that sounds like a great idea. But what happens if the government has already got a list of people who they want to apply? They say we've got three days of hearings that equals so many spots. Theoretically, the government, or an opposition party, could flood the submissions to the Clerk's office so that it's a

bit of a skewed presentation from the public. What we used to do, even under time allocation with other parties, is say that everybody who wants to apply applies and gets on the list. They have until a certain date and then the list is closed.

Then what happens, if there are more people who apply than there are spots in the committee to appear, is that each of the parties gets an equal number of people they get to pick. That allows for a good cross-section of people who apply to be before the committee, because the government may know that a particular witness is hostile to a particular initiative in the bill and they don't want that person to go in, and that's why they flood the application process; it's something that they can do. At the very least, what we should be able to do is have a system where you apply, and if we don't fill all the spots then everybody, from each of the caucuses, gets to pick an equal number of people. That way, we at least make who is presenting at the committee a little bit fairer.

Those are my comments. I know our other member from your House team wants to speak, so I'll let them do so. But Mr. Speaker, we will vote against this time allocation motion. It's a bad idea just generally, but if you read this time allocation motion, it is really about selling the public short on their ability to have their say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kawartha Lakes—Brock—sorry, Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: That's pretty good, Mr. Speaker.

We're speaking now on the time allocation for the 2016 Ontario budget. We wanted more time to speak about the budget because, in the biggest phrase and emphasis I can put: The Liberals just made life harder for the people in Ontario.

We can't support the budget because we're uncompetitive, it's unsustainable and it's unaffordable for Ontarians. We've had 13 years of reckless spending. The government is spending about \$1 billion every month just on paying off the debt, a debt which has doubled since the Liberal government was first elected in 2003. In fact, the Premier, Kathleen Wynne, has the worst fiscal record of any sitting Premier. What does that debt mean? It's \$22,000 in debt for every person in Ontario. Even the House leader's new baby girl, that we're all congratulating him on, was just born into the world with a \$22,000 debt already.

This is the third-largest budget item. It's \$11 billion a year just to pay the interest on that debt. That could have been money that was spent to support our health care system, our aging population; money that could be going to long-term care, hospice and palliative care. You know what? Our seniors—which is a growing number, and the Liberal government has seen that demographic coming: the number of seniors that are in the province of Ontario—are very vulnerable. They need a hand up, but they're being left behind by this government.

We believed that this budget might be a chance for the government to show the people of Ontario that they were listening, but they didn't listen to any of the consultations that went on. In fact, they had this written before they even had consultations. Just the sale of the LCBO stores that was uncovered yesterday by our critic for finance, the member from Nipissing—who has done an excellent job—brought that out.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We'll just see what your answers are today, because you had no answers yesterday when we asked that question.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You have no sincere interest in listening to what the people of Ontario, especially the rural people of Ontario, have been telling you. It's an attack, no question, on the middle-class, for sure, and it's doing nothing for health care and crumbling schools or seniors.

The third-largest budget item in this government—you have health care, education, and then you have paying the interest on the debt of \$11 billion. It's \$1 billion a month. Ontario has the highest debt in Canada.

When the government always talks about its plans for infrastructure investments, having such a deficit and ballooning debt takes money away from what we actually need. We need to foster the right conditions in this province for our economy to succeed, but we are hampered by financial incompetence and mismanagement by this Liberal government. Our essential services are being stretched thin. Whenever I highlight the underfunded areas for our probation officers and parole officers, especially in light of what happened in Renfrew county and the triple homicides, or the fact that the budget contains no new funding to effectively combat human trafficking, no credible plan to manage the rising energy costs, or more funding to build long-term-care beds-how can we support such a budget? Where is the money for those things that we so desperately need? It's a blatant lack of compassion, and they're not looking out for the best interests of Ontarians.

There are so many topics and so little time, Mr. Speaker. That's why they brought in time allocation. I'll try and get to some of what I've definitely heard in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

The government has no credible plan to address Ontario's unaffordable hydro rates and energy prices, which continue to rise and will hurt ratepayers right across the province. It continues to be the number one issue that my constituency office deals with.

The big picture is that Ontario has the highest energy rates in North America. Hydro rates have increased by more than \$1,000 a year for the average family since 2003, and it's only going to continue to rise.

Every time this Liberal government makes a decision for political reasons, Ontario families pay. What's worse is that this government seems to be perfectly happy to continue with the sale of Hydro One, without any assurances that the sale will not result in even more hydro increases.

What were the polls? Over 80% of the people didn't want Hydro One to be sold. Did the government listen? No. It's a one-time sale, to try to balance their books. It's

a desperate move by the Liberal government. The people of Ontario were opposed to it. Municipal councils—all my municipal councils—were against the sale and wrote to the government on that, but they didn't listen.

Hydro One is the tipping point for people who are on fixed income or in marginal categories in my riding. They have put them into poverty. I have said time and time again in this Legislature that I have more people in poverty than I did 13 years ago, when this government took power. It's real. They tell me these stories. They're being pushed out of their homes, if they had homes to stay in. They are trying to pay their hydro. But the cycle goes that you get them on a payment plan, but in reality, it's so large that they eventually can't make the payment plan. They don't pay the property taxes. They go to the food banks.

In Haliburton county, at the chamber of commerce, there were three awards won by Fuel for Warmth, which is a fuel bank. That's how desperate people are. There are actually fuel banks, because they can't afford to heat their homes and feed themselves. That is a sign of the times.

I see more people hitchhiking on the side of the roads in my area, because they can't afford the cars, the insurance, the hydro bills. The cost of everything is going up, and they can't afford it. It is tragic to see.

We asked the government to bring forward a plan that's affordable. Even if they just stopped signing those unaffordable, intrusive and, in my case, subsidized industrial wind turbines that are going up and being forced down the throats of all of us in rural Ontario—and the people and the councils that have fought against this government, to stop industrial wind turbines, are appealing. They're raising money to appeal this ridiculous plan.

The industrial wind turbines in my area are predominantly in the Oak Ridges moraine, a supposedly protected environmental jewel in the province of Ontario. There is no reason that industrial wind turbines should be erected there. It's a failed government policy. They overrode the municipal councils. They overrode the communities—bullying at its finest, actually. It's just unacceptable.

I commend them for fighting these industrial wind turbines. For years, this fight has gone on. We hope that they're never erected. I hope the government is listening and looking logically at the arguments against those industrial wind turbines there.

As I talk about hydro and energy, it's important to acknowledge the importance of climate change. It's real; it's man-made. We need to take action. It's a serious challenge that requires a credible plan.

The Liberal government's plan of cap-and-trade is not the right way to go. It will start in January of next year. By 2017 and 2018, the revenue collected will be a staggering \$1.9 billion. Look, even your former finance minister Greg Sorbara said it was a money grab and there's no proof in the world that cap-and-trade would decrease emissions. So why don't you listen to Greg Sorbara, if you won't listen to me?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Because he's wrong.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Is that why he got out of your party? He didn't agree with you anymore?

Anyway, the cap-and-trade program is supposed to lower Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions, but the government really hasn't outlined how the revenue will reduce emissions. They said the funds will go toward innovation, transit and clean technology, but we all know that it's going to go to a Liberal slush fund. Come on. There's no accountability—

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: No, no. There's no accountability. *Interjections*.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): First of all, I want to deal with the importance of—in debate, we address the Speaker, through the Speaker, so that we don't get antagonism going across the floor.

Secondly, this is a time-allocated bill, which, to me, would imply it's an important bill. Because it's an important bill, I would ask that members in this Legislature pay attention to debate and show respect so that each side has the opportunity to voice their opinion. So I would ask that we maintain order in this House, listen carefully to the speaker, and I will ask all speakers to address through the Chair. Thank you very much.

I would ask that the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock continue with debate.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a compliment when you get the other side so riled up that the Speaker has to intercede. So thank you very much for that.

You have the price of gasoline that is—the Premier said that it's going up 4.3 cents a litre with the cap-and-trade. The price of natural gas is going up a miniscule amount, they say. But in reality, the private sector analysts have actually crunched the numbers and, in the long-term, they say that gas will go up, on average, about \$400 a year for the average family and home heating will be going up an average of \$475 a year.

So how are senior citizen on fixed incomes—they're already freezing to death in the middle of the day because they're scared to turn the heat on, and that is reality, or they're going to some place in a mall that has heat so they can walk around and save money by not turning the heat on. That is the problem. And the energy retrofits in this budget that the government has outlined only apply to natural gas. Of course, that's going up too.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, it doesn't.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Okay. Well, I hope that the—

Mr. Steve Clark: You do have time left.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes. I hope there's some response, because what have they got against people in rural Ontario that can't get natural gas? We only have oil and propane in rural Ontario. We'd like natural gas, but we don't have natural gas.

The agricultural community has asked for dollars for more infrastructure for natural gas, because guess what? They can't pay all the bills that it costs for electricity in the province of Ontario either. They've asked for that infrastructure; that was ignored in this budget. In fact, the agriculture budget was decreased by \$28 million, and they gave no farm industrial rate for electricity at all.

I have an email from one of my constituents that says:

"As seniors, the recent Liberal government budget hurts us in so many ways ... higher cost for gas, more cost for home heat, more cost to drive, more cost for electricity, more cost for health care and drug costs ... the only thing I'm able to do is eat less and hope I don't need more health care.

"The changes really hurt us. And we already have difficulties dealing with higher food costs and mandatory home expense increases!

"What can we do to stop this madness?" this lady said. Right on.

I want to talk a bit about health care. I don't have much time left. If the government hadn't mismanaged the province's finances and taken away funding from essential services, our hospitals wouldn't be in such dire straits. So the picture is, for the last four years, this government has frozen hospital budgets, which is actually a cut because their costs have gone up. So it's been a cut, and they're asking them to go into their fifth year. They've put a 1%, maybe, increase in this budget—not even close to meeting the demands that the hospitals have because of, mainly, our aging senior population. But, after four years, how much more can you cut? Let's be real

One of my hospitals, Ross Memorial Hospital, is facing basically a \$3-million cut. They are doing an incredible job at managing the decrease in funding that this government has put them on, going into their fourth year. I know the member from Northumberland is in the same situation. Our mid-sized hospitals have a funding formula that just doesn't work. We have gone to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to write a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care about this glaring, striking, detrimental problem with mid-size hospital funding.

1000

The hospital in Lindsay has done what they could with attrition, with trying to move services in the most cost-effective way. The hospital needs assistance. Is it getting some? We don't know for sure because, again, we don't know the details, but it's not going to be enough. So I say to you, look at the mid-size hospital funding formula especially.

I want to talk about long-term care and I want to talk about my LHIN. I have the Central East LHIN; the member from Northumberland is also in that LHIN. We have the largest demand and the lowest capacity in the LHIN; I believe I'm saying that right. We have that not only for long-term-care beds, but we have one of the highest needs for mental health assistance programs and facilities in Ontario. That's an Ontario comparison. The Central East Community Care Access Centre has given me the number of individuals waiting for long-term care in the Central East LHIN; it is 8,592.

You cannot address the long-term-care problem that we have in the province of Ontario without building new

beds. The Central East LHIN goes from Scarborough, Haliburton county—it's massive, to start with. But I want to highlight that it's the lowest number of beds available, and the highest number of those in need are mental health and addictions; it's the second-highest number of active mental health cases in the province of Ontario. Our CCACs now are going to be rolled into the LHINs. Whichever title you want to put on it, it is not sustainable. The government has to address the high-need demand in our areas.

They've got the doctors enraged, and you can bet your bottom dollar doctors are going to leave the province. You can't get hip replacements in January, February and March for seniors because they've already gone through their budget, because they haven't addressed the growing seniors population. They are laying off nurses. Pick a hospital, any hospital; they are laying off nurses.

The government has been irresponsible in managing the finances of the province of Ontario, and the people in Ontario are suffering. That's why I'm voting against this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this debate, although I'm disappointed that I'm contributing it towards a time allocation debate, because I know myself and other members in this House really wanted to critique, offer suggestions and point out what is really in this budget. What we hear from the government side is all the great things that are in that budget. We have other opinions, and we need that time to debate this budget in order to communicate those opinions. But when you put a time allocation motion forward, that means each party has 40 minutes to debate this.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I want more.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, we're asking for more time. This is probably—I mean, every bill that goes through this House is extremely important and affects people's lives, but when it's a budget motion, it's far and wide and reaching. This is why a time allocation motion, especially in these circumstances, really defeats the purpose of a fulsome, productive, critiquing exchange of ideas. That's what the debate should be about.

If you look at the title we have, Jobs for Today and Tomorrow, it's tongue-in-cheek in a lot of ways. We've had three days of debate, and on our side, on the NDP side, we have had three speakers. One of those speakers is our finance critic. The finance critic, or any critic in the House, once a bill is presented, takes an hour lead of the time. So, Speaker, there have not been many contributions that we've been allowed to make.

Why I feel passionately about this specific time allocation motion that shouldn't be in front of this House when it comes to this budget is because we haven't had an opportunity to articulate the needs of our constituents. We haven't had an opportunity to stress how seniors are going to be adversely affected when they have to pay more for the prescriptions deductible.

Speaker, I had seniors come into my office before this budget, talking about how hard it is to make that copayment because of their income levels. I looked up some research, I'd say, about a year and a half ago on how that income level was not changed for 20 years. Then we get this budget piece for drug prescriptions, and it's making it harder, not easier, for seniors to survive.

The member from the Conservative Party talked about the renovation tax credit that's in this budget. It's very vague. We believe that it's only for people with natural gas. That's what comes across in that budget. Read the budget book. That's what it says; that's what the message is.

On the other side, the Liberal Party, the Treasurer, the minister for treasury, she said, "No, that's not right. It's for all types of energy." She has left the House—

Ms. Laurie Scott: She's going to find out.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: She's going to check it out. She's not even quite sure—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd just like to remind the member that we cannot make reference to any members who are not present in the House. Okay? Thank you very much.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, that wasn't to identify that she's not here. That was to say that she's actually going to check, so that we can be informed—oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I believe the point has been made. I'll ask that you would continue along with your debate, but do not refer, whether it be intentional or unintentional, to anyone who may not be here in the Legislature. Thank you very much.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Okay. The point is, there needs to be clarification on this home renovation tax credit. People believe it's only for natural gas. This is why it's so wrong to time-allocate things. We are now pointing that out, and this is the first time that we have heard it's not just for natural gas. I think most members here are surprised.

Speaker, when I became an MPP, one of the things that I really valued was actually standing up in this Legislature and bringing the thoughts, opinions, experiences and life examples of how legislation affects the people in London–Fanshawe. This time allocation doesn't allow for us to express this in a wholesome way.

When we're elected as members, we have a duty to speak to each of our constituents and to bring their voices to this Legislature, so that legislation can actually respond to their needs, so that we can let this government know what amendments are required.

I'll give you an example, Speaker. Here's another miscommunication, I think, in a lot of ways, when it came to legislation.

When I first got elected—it was a minority government—there was the home renovation tax credit for seniors who wanted to remain in their homes. If you had a renovation, like in a bathroom which was going to be accessible—ramps, all kinds of accessible devices that you might need, or construction you might need to do in your home—they were going to give you a tax credit. If

you spent roughly \$10,000, you'd get a \$1,400 tax credit. We sat in this House and we explained that this legislation, though it had a purpose, was not going to be effective and actually reach the market that this government was trying to capture, which would be a tax credit for seniors, to remain in their home. What has happened because of that legislation? That has been repealed. In the government's own words, "There wasn't enough uptake."

Now we're talking about seniors and a drug prescription costs increase. We're letting you know this is the wrong decision. Seniors will not be filling their prescriptions. Seniors take an average of about eight medications a year. If you're a senior who makes \$19,500, and you've got to pay an extra \$70, and an extra co-payment fee, are you going to put that \$70 out? Can you afford to put that \$70 out?

Speaker, seniors are going to go without medication. Their health is going to deteriorate. Their health is deteriorating under the fact that this government is increasing the cost of the prescription drugs deductible by \$70.

1010

This is a reality, Speaker. In the last election, in 2014, when I was knocking on doors, I had a home care worker tell me that when she goes out to see her clients in their homes—seniors specifically—do you know what their diet consisted of? She was very worried. Their diet consisted of tea with toast and marmalade. That's what they had for dinner.

This is a reality that seniors are facing. They are struggling financially. They can't afford this government's \$70 increase on prescription drugs. They can't afford higher hydro rates.

The other part of that is, when they're looking to downsize from their home, if they have to for financial reasons or perhaps health reasons—they can't maintain the outside of their home—there is no affordable housing. There are not a lot of affordable apartments for seniors. I hear that a lot.

The other part of this budget consultation that happened—yes, they travelled the budget, Speaker, but this budget was written before we had an opportunity to actually consult with constituents and the committee. Our finance critic said that, and I believe her. I believe there is that speculation that this budget was written before consultations started. That's a sad message that follows this government, that decisions are already made before consultation is put out there.

The Robarts school and the Amethyst Demonstration School, in my riding: The government is doing consultations. The parents are contacting me, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please. I just again want to remind our members that there is a debate going on. I'm not discrediting the fact that you may have an important message or conversation going on, but that has a better place—perhaps not here at the time—and to have respect for the member. Again, I'd like to remind everyone.

I turn it back to the member for London–Fanshawe to continue with debate. Thank you.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I know my colleagues here; there was no intention of disrupting my debate. I think they just get really passionate and talk about issues. They're probably talking about this home tax credit for natural gas—

Ms. Laurie Scott: We were.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: —and how we need to make sure we communicate that to the public.

Mr. Steve Clark: We were. That's what we were talking about.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I knew that. But I have to remember what I was going to discuss. Yes, actually, I do remember: the very important issue of the Robarts and Amethyst schools.

This government is out consulting with the schools. I have heard that they actually are sending letters to parents in the school to consult with, but not everybody is having that opportunity. The parents that have actually applied to Robarts and Amethyst for the coming session, for the coming school year, are not invited to speak. What has happened is, this government has suspended all new applications to the school, so these parents aren't actually able to communicate the needs of their kids and how important it is that that school remains open. The other thing the government did was cap enrolment at 42 students. It has the capacity for 138 students.

Parents are telling me that they think this government's decision has already been cast in stone. When the public feels that their voice isn't heard—when this government is supposed to do their job and consult—that is a real problem.

Time allocation on this budget bill is the wrong thing to do. There are mixed messages in this budget. People don't have a clear understanding of what it will do for them. What they do understand is that things are going up, and they can't afford to pay for them. That's what they are worried about.

I know I have limited time left to wrap up. I hope that this government will pay attention. I know we keep telling this government that there are some things that are fundamentally wrong that they need to correct. Time allocation on a budget bill is a fundamental thing they need to listen to and correct. If nothing else, what harm does it do to continue this debate? It's actually a good thing for democracy. It's actually a healthy thing. It promotes confidence outside of this House and inside our ridings.

Speaker, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to debate on this issue. I'm going to keep going until you let me know that the House is ready to adjourn. So I'm just going to wrap up—oh, I'll let you do your job, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I gave you a chance to wrap up a moment ago. Then when you said, "I'd like another opportunity to wrap up," I figured that would be my cue to state that it's now 10:15.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I see a friend of mine, Kim Sytsma, who is a local beef farmer in the Athens area. I just want to welcome Kim to Oueen's Park.

Mr. John Vanthof: I also see an old friend of mine, Bob Gordanier. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I have a few introductions. I hope you'll indulge me.

First we have, from the city of Pickering, Mayor David Ryan and regional councillors Kevin Ashe and David Pickles. They're here to pay tribute to Kevin's late father, George Lyle Ashe, the former mayor of Pickering, MPP for Durham West, and minister in the Bill Davis and Frank Miller cabinets.

Secondly, I'd like to welcome the grade 5 students from St. Brendan Catholic School. They're visiting the Legislature today with their teachers to learn about the Ontario Legislature.

Next, I'd like to welcome Melissa Kim who is in the gallery today. She's my mentee from the CivicAction DiverseCity Fellows program. It's particularly fitting Kim is able to join us here for International Women's Day.

Last, but not least, we have our Roundtable on Violence Against Women co-chairs. I'd like to welcome Farrah Khan and Sly Castaldi. Thank you for being here in the Legislature.

Mr. Robert Bailey: In the west members' gallery, I have constituents from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex: Malcolm McLean, Juel Howse, Catherine McLean, Morgan Tamminga and Claire Tamminga. They're here to see their granddaughter and sister Micah Tamminga, who is the page captain today.

It also happens to be Micah's 13th birthday today. Happy birthday, from the Legislature to Micah.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to introduce Christina Demeter. She's an intern in my office, from Ryerson, sitting in the west gallery.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to welcome the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, OCUFA, who are here today for their lobby day. Please join me in welcoming them.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in welcoming Bob Gordanier. He's the past president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario, but most importantly, a proud resident of Dufferin-Caledon.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I met earlier today with some representatives from OCUFA. John Wilson is here from Western University and Ben Muller from King's University College. Andrea Calver is up here—she's on the staff—and my buddy Brian Brown from the University of Windsor. They have a reception later. They're inviting everybody to join them. Thank you and welcome to Oueen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would like to welcome Dylan Atack and his dad Ritch Atack to the Legislature today. Dylan is a proud Hamilton resident and a number one Hamilton Ticats booster.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted that Smokey Thomas is with us today, the president of OPSEU. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to welcome Smokey Thomas from OPSEU and Clarke Eaton as well. They're

in the members' gallery.

Hon. Jeff Leal: For one last time, in the members' east gallery today, we have Bob Gordanier, the past president of the Beef Farmers of Ontario; director Kim Sytsma; and the manager of policies and issues, Richard Horne. We welcome them here today.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I understand that we have five guests from Durham region sitting in the gallery today: Rosemary Theriault, her husband Gerry Theriault, Ann Clement, Shirley Keelor and Bonnie Lee Davidson. Welcome to Oueen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It is a great pleasure to welcome Connie de Souza, the mother of page captain Laura de Souza.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Mr. Speaker, if you'll indulge me, I have a few guests to introduce today. I want to introduce guests visiting us from Portugal on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Real Canadian Portuguese Historical Museum and the unveiling of a replica of the caravela portuguesa: Bruno Gonçalves Neves, first tenant, chief of investigation, at the marine museum of Portugal; Rui Bela, a filmmaker from Portugal; and José Rocha, from the Real Canadian Portuguese Historical Museum.

Bem-vindos to Oueen's Park.

Also, I wanted to introduce a very, very special guest to Queen's Park today: my favourite 10-year-old niece, Jessica.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I had the pleasure this morning of meeting with the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, and I'd like to introduce Rob Kristofferson from Wilfrid Laurier University, Ed Carter from the University of Guelph, and Sally Gunz from the University of Waterloo. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I also have some guests who came in from up north. This is William Osei from Algoma University; Gautam Das from Lakehead University; Brian Ross from NOSM, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine; Rhiannon Don from Nipissing University; as well as Mark Rosenfeld, executive director of OCUFA. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I, too, wish to welcome Smokey Thomas and Clarke Eaton who are here representing OPSEU.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to welcome Smokey Thomas.

This morning we have in the Speaker's gallery some friends of mine who are guests for lunch: Mr. Ron Sage, Mr. Dave Piper and Mr. Gord Taylor. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here with us.

I'm also sure that the members are going to be pleased to join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late George Lyle Ashe, the MPP for Durham West during the 31st, 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his sons Steven and Kevin; Kevin's wife, Karen; daughter Cheryl Hinzel and husband Erwin; grandchildren Anika, Eric, Matt, Krista, and Andrea and her husband Kevin; the mayor of Pickering, Dave Ryan; and Councillor Dave Pickles.

Also in the Speaker's gallery: Mr. David Warner, the Speaker in the 35th Parliament; Mr. Steve Gilchrist, MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments, and also president of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians; and Mr. Douglas Moffatt, MPP during the 30th Parliament for Durham East. Welcome to our Legislature.

Applause.

GEORGE ASHE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I call upon the government House leader for a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to George Lyle Ashe, former member for Durham West, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute to George Lyle Ashe, former member of Durham West. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker. It is always an honour to stand in this proud Legislature, and today it is my honour to stand to share on behalf of the family and friends joining us here today, and to pay tribute to George Lyle Ashe.

I am pleased to welcome George's family today. George and his wife Margo raised four children, so welcome to his son Steve, daughter Cheryl and husband Erwin, and son Kevin and his spouse Karen. His son Brian couldn't be here today, but he's watching on the Internet from North Carolina. We also welcome granddaughter Andrea, her husband Kevin and their daughter, greatgranddaughter Anika. Welcome to grandsons Eric and Matt, and granddaughter-in-law Krista.

I am also pleased to recognize and welcome Councillor David Pickles and Pickering's Mayor Dave Ryan to Queen's Park.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about a former member of this Legislature who dedicated his career to his community and to public service. George Ashe started his journey in Ottawa and served in the early 1960s as alderman for Nepean township. When he moved with his family to Pickering, he continued on his journey of service and was elected deputy reeve of Pickering.

Four years after that, George Ashe became the very first mayor of Pickering, when we went to regional government. It is interesting that there have only been three other Pickering mayors, and we are glad, as I mentioned, to have Mayor Ryan join us today.

George served as mayor until he was elected to this Legislature for the riding of Durham West in 1977. Back then, Durham West would have encompassed Pickering, Ajax and Whitby, but it was at a time when Durham region was just starting to grow and take shape.

He was a proud Conservative and was appointed in 1981 to Bill Davis's cabinet as Minister of Revenue. He later served as Minister of Government Services. He served as Minister of Energy and Chair of the Management Board in Frank Miller's cabinet.

George Ashe was not a politician who sought the limelight. He was hard-working and was a quiet type of guy. He didn't hold the flashy cabinet portfolios, but he committed himself to them, recognizing how important they were to the efficient running of government.

George served as a member of a minority, then majority government and also as an opposition member. I understand that he preferred being on the government benches. George served the people of Durham West here in this Legislature until 1987, but his public service didn't stop there. George served as a Catholic school trustee in Clarington and did that for a term.

George was a resident of Durham for almost 50 years and must have seen so much change, grow and develop in that time. He clearly also saw opportunities to be a part of that development through the various avenues of service he pursued.

Later in George's life, he battled Parkinson's disease, but even in that lengthy struggle he continued to contribute to the broader community. He and his wife, Margo, and daughter, Cheryl, became significant fundraisers for Parkinson research and participated annually in the Parkinson SuperWalk.

George Ashe didn't only leave behind a lifetime of service and commitment; he evidently has left a clear legacy of work ethic and service. As many in public service know, it can be a tremendous sacrifice being away from home and family life. George's commitment to his community was something that his children grew up with. He was always involved, and whether he meant to or not, he led by example. We all learn from our parents. Sometimes we learn what to do and sometimes we learn what not to do. But it is a testament to George's commitment and convictions that he was not only a model for others to follow, he was a model that others have followed.

I was pleased to welcome George's family earlier, but I would like to specifically point out that George's son Steven is here, and we appreciate his service and involvement at the Ontario Regiment in Oshawa. Steve is a retired corporal with the Ontario Regiment reserves. Also, George's son Kevin Ashe has chosen to serve and is a Pickering city and regional councillor, and was a trustee before that. I will say that perhaps the apples didn't fall far from the tree.

Something pretty interesting, actually, is that back in 1974, George was the very first chairman of the finance committee at the new region, and Kevin serves on that same committee at the region now.

George Ashe was a proud Conservative, an avid Blue Jays fan and a remarkable husband, brother, father,

grandfather and great-grandfather, or "Grumpy." He leaves a lifetime and a legacy of public and community service. Durham region is a dynamic and wonderful region, and as it grows and strengthens, it does so on a community framework and foundation made stronger by George Ashe and his lifelong dedication to public service.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm delighted to speak this morning in memory of George Ashe, who was elected on the same day as I was to the Legislature, and that is June 9, 1977, so we were together. This happens with all of us who are elected at the same time: It's the class of that particular year, and so you have special memories of those people who joined the Legislature on the same date that you did.

George also recognized something very important. Although it's not a necessity, there's a great advantage to having served in municipal government before advanceing—if you can say "advancing," because some people say municipal government is more important—before changing and coming to the provincial level of government. George recognized that. You can tell by his early days in politics, his service to his community and the separate school board and as a municipal councillor. He always had the community at heart. That's exceedingly important.

I'm going to quote, in a couple of minutes, some of George's own words, because they're rather revealing. There was a great interview that took place with George where, in his words, he talks about his time in the Legislature. Things keep coming through my mind. He was not a person who suffered fools easily, and I remember—I'm not saying the person is a fool; please don't get me wrong—that one of his own members one day mentioned something about the nuclear industry, which of course is very important to George's part of the province, and I could hear him addressing the person at that particular time. I was glad Hansard didn't pick it up; it would have been unparliamentary language. But he did make certain reference to another member of his own party who had said something that didn't fit with his constituency. It goes back to the theme that his constituency was most important to him. He, of course, had a private sector career in the insurance industry, so he met a lot of people through that and was involved in community organizations.

The portfolios he served in have been mentioned. They're significant portfolios. It's quite right to say that they're not the glamorous or high-profile portfolios, but it's exceedingly important in government to have those portfolios and to have a competent person there. You can say that George always knew where the bottom line was, and he was very careful about that, both at the municipal level and at the provincial level of government.

They asked him, "Politicians: Why do they do it?" An interesting answer: "One has to be a bit of a masochist.

"Of course, there's that initial appeal of wanting to do something either because you feel you have something to contribute or you're not happy with the way someone else is doing it. You know, it's easy to be critical. But it's quite another thing to say I can do better and actually do something about it.

"The masochism, though, I think that comes into it because so often you're in a 'no-win' situation. If you do a good job there's often not much in the way of gratitude or thank-yous. But if you're perceived to have done wrong, you take a lot of flak for it. You become a problem solver for your constituents but you weigh all these things and they're simply offset by the love of the job, the sense of involvement and the challenge of being here."

I thought he really captured why he came to the Legislature.

He talked about majority government. Remember, there had been a minority government from 1977 to 1981, and they said, "Okay, we're now coming into majority government." "Certainly, too, I think we all have to avoid the impression that we're the big 'fat cat,' unconcerned majority and that we're not going to listen to anyone. We're going to have to bend over backwards to make sure that impression's not there." So he recognized in the transition how important it was to be able to respond to the Legislature as a whole.

When he talks about constituency versus ministry—and this is exceedingly important, because it's a difficult decision when you have a ministry. "My constituency work comes first, it's as simple as that. I've conveyed this philosophy to my staff both here and in my riding and they know how strongly I feel about this. Obviously, if I don't satisfy to some appreciable degree, the needs, expectations and desires of electorate of Durham West, I won't be here later on.... That's a reality no politician should ever forget."

George never did forget that. He was an excellent constituency person—a person I grew to find very interesting and a likable person to deal with. He was a solid Conservative, I assure you of that, a solid Progressive Conservative, a partisan, as all of us are in the House, but he was more interested in getting things done and being practical.

The last thing I want to say to Kevin and the audience is that there was one headline that says—I've got to read this to you: "Liberals Fire Minister's Son as Chauffeur." Now, that wasn't really the case, of course, and Kevin took it, as he always does, with the greatest of laughter and a good sense of humour. But when there's a transition of government, he recognized—and he had been an excellent person travelling with ministers he had served with. You know that those people tend to be rather close. They hear the conversations going on. By the way, there were no telephones in the car in the early days, so there was not those kinds of conversations, but you certainly had an insight. I think Kevin recognized that when the government changed hands, they would probably be looking for somebody else, but that didn't keep him down. It's in the tradition. The family has followed the tradition of George Ashe. Kevin, who I know very well

out of the members of the family, knew that and has remained, in fact, a friend of all of ours.

There's a certain print of Queen's Park that was in George's office. Tracy MacCharles, the present member now, wanted to note—and I think it's most appropriate—that that was given to her by Kevin Ashe and it is now in her constituency office. George may no longer be with us, but evidence of his service at Queen's Park is here. We thank his family for sharing him with us. 1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tributes?

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's my privilege and honour to acknowledge the life of George Ashe, the member of provincial Parliament for Durham West. I'm pleased to recognize many members of George's family and some friends who have joined us in the gallery: Steven, his son; Cheryl Hinzel and Erwin Hinzel; my good friend Kevin Ashe, with whom I served on regional council, and his partner, Karen O'Brien; Andrea Arkell and Kevin Arkell; Anika Arkell; Eric Hinzel and Matt Hinzel; Krista Barnsley; His Worship Mayor Dave Ryan from the city of Pickering; my colleague from regional council David Pickles; and George's son Brian is watching from his home in North Carolina. I'd also be remiss if I didn't acknowledge Doug Moffatt, who was a former member of Parliament here as well.

As Kevin has told me, his father was not an ostentatious man. He was very conservative in nature, a man of dedication and purpose, an extremely hard worker, as my colleague indicated earlier in her comments, whose roles in the Legislature reflected the character of the man. George was always very comfortable as he participated in the business of the Legislature, but he never felt it necessary to seek the limelight.

I read an interview George gave in 1981 after his appointment as the Minister of Revenue. He was so proud of that appointment because he had served as a parliamentary assistant for three previous ministers. It really paralleled what Kevin had told me about his dad. George said that an effective politician "is a good listener, an excellent listener, that's the main thing." Isn't that true? "And then of prime importance too, the best politicians must never be afraid to admit they don't know everything. They must tell the person this and get out there and find the right answers."

George Ashe was a very decent man and never tried to be something that he wasn't. He played to his strengths. He said, "I've always been known as a hard worker. I put in a lot of time and effort and I think this has been well recognized." And it was, in his riding and other parts of Durham region. "As well, I've always tried to be available and to assist my associates wherever and whenever possible...."

Predeceased by his wife, Margo, who was a key partner in what George accomplished, George passed away peacefully at the Village of Taunton Mills in Whitby on August 3, 2014.

Mr. Speaker, many of us here could learn a great deal from the character of George Ashe. He believed in helping people who could not help themselves or who have suffered misfortune. He especially believed in a hand up for those who need it but only lacked an opportunity, all part of his deep humanity and decency. He gave his all to serve his riding and the province that he loved.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all the members for their kind and heartfelt comments to the family.

To the family: As is the tradition, we will have copies of Hansard and a DVD of the tributes delivered to the family with our love and affection. Thank you for the gift of your father.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, I asked a serious public policy question and the environment minister responded by answering and pulling a number out of thin air, out of his hat. The number wasn't real. The number that is real is \$1.9 billion. That's the size of the next Liberal slush fund—a fund collected under the guise of fighting climate change. It is disheartening that you would make families and businesses pay so much more for this government's pet projects.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't get an answer yesterday. Will the Premier of Ontario—will this government—commit to giving every single cent collected back to the families of Ontario, yes or no?

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. While the clock is stopped, I'm going to remind all members that I'm the Chair.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, I want to begin by wishing everyone a very happy International Women's Day.

I want to say to the Leader of the Opposition that I think it's terrific that he has now decided that he supports carbon pricing. I think that's a very good thing. It speaks to the realization across the country and, in fact, around the globe that climate change is not a distant threat; climate change is something that we have to deal with right now.

One of the things we have to do is invest in the technologies and we have to invest in the community to make sure that we reduce our carbon footprint. All the money that comes in through the cap-and-trade system will be reinvested in green projects in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, grow the economy and help our economy to be that cutting edge—

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated, please. First and foremost, I'm just

going to give some advice. The ovation wars that are going on, if they would stop, we'd be able to get to questions.

Number two, it's hard for me to decide on who's heckling who when members of the government side are—the Premier's giving the answer and I'm hearing heckling from that side, and also heckling on this side that basically just wants to repeat names over and over again. Let's just calm it down. That's your last time and then I'll move into individuals and warnings if I have to.

Leader?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I didn't get an answer on whether it would simply be another Liberal slush fund. Let me say this: Ontario's former Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, said, "Other provinces did the right thing because the provinces also lowered income taxes at the same time." Mr. Miller said, "It's a matter of being fair with people and making it very visible."

He was referring to a revenue-neutral model, with full independent oversight. Why won't this government do the right thing? Why won't this government commit to an open, transparent and visible revenue-neutral model? Will you do that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As the Premier pointed out—*Interjection*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds-Grenville.

Carry on.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As the Premier pointed out, we're very glad in this House that the other side has seen the light and that the Leader of the Opposition has flipflopped to a more reasonable position on this. Now the PC leader says he agrees that climate change is a major threat—that was Mr. Brown on August 27, 2015. But when he ran for the leadership, he said that he would not bring his plan forward, a cap-and-trade system, for a carbon tax—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

1100

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I would appreciate a direct answer, rather than government spin, diversion and misdirection.

A 2015 Financial Post article said it was very clear that the revenue-neutral model worked. Revenue neutrality is key. Don't take my word for it. People from all around Ontario have been speaking out.

Let me share with you a quote from a notable Ontarian: "I have to be a little bit sceptical about the whole scheme, other than it's going to be a lot of new money into government." Who said that? Former finance minister Greg Sorbara.

Mr. Speaker, if Greg Sorbara sees this is a cash grab, if Greg Sorbara sees this as another tool for the government to simply take more from Ontario families, will the Premier admit to the province of Ontario that this is

nothing more than a cash grab that the Liberal Party is doing, once again, on the backs of Ontarians?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You won't know when I'm going to pounce.

Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Then again, the PC leader said that there has to be a price on carbon on March 10, 2016. But then again, he ran against the federal plan to cut pollution by putting a price on carbon. Again, another flip-flop.

Then the PC leader said there was practically universal support in his caucus for carbon pricing, Mr. Speaker, flipping again. But again, just last week, my critic said, "Will you heed the advice of the PC Party of Ontario and commit to not implementing a carbon tax?"

Now, the PC leader said that the majority of his members agree on this, just on March 7. But then, the poor president of his party called the carbon pricing "the Liberal vision of Canada...a Liberal carbon tax on everything" in November.

Mr. Speaker, this member has taken so many positions daily on this, from week to week, that we never know what his position's going to be—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Start the clock. New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, a government that can't defend their own plan chooses to attack. Since I can't get an answer on revenue neutrality, my question—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who is the question for?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Since I can't get an answer on revenue neutrality or whether this is simply another Liberal slush fund, let's talk about health care. This budget promised that there would be support for health care. But what we're seeing is the opposite: more cuts, cuts and cuts.

Toronto General and Toronto Western had to cut 51 RN positions; 59 were cut at Mount Sinai; 61 RN positions were lost at St. Joseph's Health Care Centre in Hamilton. When will this stop? I thought we heard a commitment to health care in this budget. Instead, it's more cuts on nurses. When will the government stop cutting nurses in this province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the Leader of the Opposition will know if he looks closely at the budget, spending for health care will increase by a billion dollars, as a result of this budget. We are very aware, Mr. Speaker, of the importance of continuing to invest in health care, specifically on hospitals. We're increasing funding to hospitals by \$345 million.

So the reality is that funding for health care continues to go up, Mr. Speaker. Additional funding for home and community care: \$75 million in community-based hospice and palliative care; \$85 million for community health services. So across the sectors within health care, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to invest. We are continuing to increase budgets, and that means more personnel, more services for people in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: This past week in Ottawa, I heard story after story about the impact of the government's cuts to physician services. Two graduating dermatology residents were forced to relocate. One family doctor was forced to fire two staff, impacting 2,500 patients. Four family doctors had to close their offices one day a week, impacting 5,000 patients. Thirteen family doctors had to limit their flu shot clinics, which impacted 17,000 patients. Those were just a few stories that I heard in Ottawa this weekend.

There is nothing in this budget that is going to help family doctors serve their patients. Will you support Ontario's doctors? Mr. Speaker, will the Premier support Ontario's physicians and support patient care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are actually investing in more patient care. The individual decisions of particular practitioners—the member opposite will have to talk to those practitioners. But there is nothing in our government's policy, there is nothing in our investments that would-

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Talk to the doctors, not the

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the Leader of the Opposition is taking a position that somehow we should put all our resources into increasing the compensation for the highest-paid physicians in the country–

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —then I would challenge him to say, in fact, we need to support health care workers across-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Leeds-Grenville, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We need to help support personal support workers. We need to make sure that we have the nurses in our hospitals that are necessary. We need to make sure that hospitals have the budgets that they need. That's why investing \$345 million more in hospitals, and \$1 billion more in health care, is exactly what should happen at this juncture.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: I appreciate the government's talking points, but I am sharing real stories, real stories of patients that we hear outside of this Queen's Park bubble. Let me share a few more stories.

We know that the postpartum depression clinic for mental health at Ontario Shores is only able to open one day a week because of this government's cuts. Cuts are threatening the obstetrics unit at Georgian Bay General Hospital. The government still hasn't committed to hiring a new doctor for obstetrics and gynecology at the unit in Leamington.

Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day. I have outlined examples of how maternal health is being cut. Will the government—will the Premier—commit to stopping the cuts to maternal health in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The leader of the official opposition can try to spin this any way that he wants to. It's interesting that he brought up the maternal unit, the obstetrics unit, at Leamington hospital, because in fact, just a couple of weeks ago, we announced an additional \$1.3 million, which will allow for the hiring of three new obstetricians at Leamington hospital, to make sure that that clinic, that birthing unit, that obstetrical unit stays open.

Frankly, I have to give some credit to the backbencher from Chatham–Kent–Essex for working co-operatively with me, with the community, with the local leadership to find a solution that will actually maintain the ability of women from the Leamington area to deliver in the province. So that's a bad example.

It's a good example of how, if we do co-operate—*Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Even if the comments are directed to the Chair, I am going to ask that any of the gestures to inflame come to me. New question.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to begin, on behalf of New Democrats, by wishing every woman in this legislative precinct, across the OPS, and women and girls across Ontario a happy International Women's Day.

My question is to the Premier. On International Women's Day, let's recognize and celebrate the many great accomplishments of Ontario women, yet we also have to recognize that Ontario has the most expensive child care in Canada. The 2016-17 budget doesn't do anything for child care in Ontario. It doesn't add a single dollar for new child care spaces in the entire province—

just announcements and re-announcements. Just last year, the Premier actually campaigned against a \$15-per-day national child care program.

1110

Can this Premier explain why moms and dads in Ontario are paying the highest child care costs in Canada and this budget doesn't add any new funding for child care spaces for Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to acknowledge how important it is that when women are at work and need the support of child care, we have those services in place.

Everyone in this Legislature and families across Ontario know that full-day kindergarten for every four- and five-year-old in this province has changed the landscape in terms of early childhood education in the province, Mr. Speaker, and it has changed the dynamics around child care. There's absolutely no doubt about that.

There is a regulation right now that is out for consultation. We continue to put more money into child care and create more spaces, recognizing that with four- and five-year-olds—and some three-year-olds, if they have a late birthday—in full-day kindergarten, the kids who are in child care are of a different age and we need to adapt to that new reality. We're in a transition on that front.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: No matter how many times the Liberals say it, full-day kindergarten is not child care in the province of Ontario. It is not child care.

It's not just New Democrats saying that this budget fails families and leaves families in the lurch. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care says, "Families that believed Ontario would prioritize work on a national early learning and child care plan will be bitterly disappointed by this reversal." Parents across Ontario took the government at its word that it would deliver. Instead, less than a quarter of Ontario children can access regulated child care spaces, and for another year parents will have to be paying child care that they can barely afford or have to put their careers on hold.

This Premier has already admitted that her budget is full of mistakes. Will she admit it was a mistake not to invest in child care in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Education is going to want to comment on the last question, Mr. Speaker.

I just need to be clear that since 2003, child care funding in this province has doubled, from \$532 million to over \$1 billion. The number of child care spaces in Ontario has grown to nearly 351,000; that's an increase of 87% since 2003. In 2016, we're providing \$1.05 billion to 47 municipalities; that's an increase in overall funding of \$16.3 million over last year.

The reality is that thousands of families across this province have the ability now to send their kids to full-day kindergarten. I know perfectly well that full-day kindergarten is not child care. That's why we continue to invest in child care in addition to full-day kindergarten. They're two different things—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's shameful that this Premier, even in her response, tried to muddy the waters around the difference between child care and all-day

learning. It's a disgrace.

Every dollar invested in child care, Speaker, brings \$1.50 in economic returns. That's because when parents can find affordable child care it means more moms and dads, but more often moms, can get back to work. It's a smart investment; I would have thought that this Premier would have believed that. It's one of the basics that people expect their government to get right.

This budget has a lot of reannouncements and even some re-reannouncements, but what it doesn't have is more affordable, quality, licensed child care for moms, dads and their children across Ontario. The Premier has acknowledged she got her budget wrong already. Will she fix it and invest in affordable, licensed child care for

families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to point out that the figures that the Premier just quoted are, in fact, child care figures, quite distinct from full-day kindergarten figures.

In addition to the figures that the Premier has mentioned, which have to do with increasing capital spending and increasing operating spending, we're also increasing the wage subsidy for our workers in licensed child care this year. For our ECEs in licensed child care—our frontline child care workers—the subsidy is going up from \$1 an hour to \$2 an hour in this year's budget. For people who work in licensed home child care, the subsidy is going up from \$10 a day to \$20 a day. That's in this year's budget.

In addition, there's additional capital this year for new child care spaces. Over three years we're building 4,000

new child care spaces.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. It's shameful that after 12 years in office there is still such a patchwork of child care in this province that there isn't enough licensed, affordable, quality child care for families in Ontario.

Parents in Ontario should be able to expect the highest quality in child care, and no parent should have to worry that their kids' safety is being put at risk. Parents across Ontario are worried about the changes to child care regulations that would mean more children with fewer adults.

The Coalition for Better Child Care says that the Premier's new rules will not improve quality and safety in child care. Martha Friendly from the Child Care Resource and Research Unit says, "If they bring this in, Ontario will be leading the race to the bottom."

Why is this Premier leading the race to the bottom in child care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I very much appreciate the input from advocates like Martha Friendly and the work that they have done for years to promote early years education. Part of the promotion of early years education has been to support our government as we implement full-day kindergarten, because that was seen in early years education as a very, very important step forward, and we've taken that step.

What that means is that we have to continue to invest in child care, because of course full-day kindergarten is not the same thing as child care. They are different things, and so as we have implemented full-day kindergarten, we have continued to work with the child care

sector to transform that sector.

The fact is that it is important that we modernize the child care sector. That's why the regulation is out for consultation, and we appreciate input from everyone who's close to the issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Pascal report was a road map for better child care and early child care education, but instead of following the road map, this Premier has veered off the road. Instead of expanding and making sure we have better integrated child care, we're seeing fragmented care here. Mums and dads are struggling to piece together the care that their kids need.

Now the government's plan will mean more kids with fewer adults. It's going to mean lower-quality child care in Ontario. I don't think that's what Mr. Pascal was

talking about when he put together his report.

The question is a simple one, and I haven't heard an answer yet: Why is this Premier leading the race to the bottom on child care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: One of the things that we've been doing actually is taking a bit of advice from Mr. Pascal, which was that we should look at the child care ratio issues which had been there for about 20 years. We've been working with a committee of advisors. We concluded, when we looked at what's happened in that 20 years since we last adjusted the ratios, that there were two significant things. Yes, we did introduce full-day kindergarten, and that means that what parents need for their four- and five-year-olds in terms of child care has changed, so we need to change. The other thing we've discovered is that over the last 20 years, maternity leave rules have changed. In fact, with a combination of maternity and paternity leaves, most parents are looking for child care at 12 months now because they're returning to work at 12 months. We are addressing that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplement-

ary

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have met with parents across Ontario who have seen their municipal child care centres closing. Those were fantastic centres that kids loved and that parents depended on. Now the experts are ringing the alarm bells that the quality of child care in Ontario is going to get even worse. Ontarians know we should be moving forward. Parents should be seeing more affordable care and quality should never be compromised.

Will this Premier actually start moving forward and not backward on quality and affordability for child care in the province of Ontario?

1120

Hon. Liz Sandals: What we are actually doing is we're adjusting the ratios so that there will be more spaces available for the 12-to-24-month group, which is where parents are really struggling to enter the system and find spaces. But we're not putting more kids; we're actually doing the opposite. We're decreasing the ratios. For infants—in the old zero-to-18-month category, it used to be 3 to 10, a maximum size of 10—we're reducing that so that it will be 1 to 3, a maximum size of nine, and you now have to have two qualified ECEs in the room.

Similarly, with the toddler age group: Yes, we're changing the age group to 12-to-24 months, but we're actually changing the ratio so it's only 1 to 4, and two qualified ECEs will have to be in the room. We're actually going to create the opportunity for more spaces for 12-to-24-month-olds, which is what parents tell us they need.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, we provided details of the LCBO document that states, "The LCBO's main intention is to sell properties." The government's response was nothing short of a Keystone Cops episode: The Premier said, "We're only selling as needed." The finance minister told the media, "We're selling, but leasing back." The infrastructure minister said, "We're not selling. Full stop." But all three contradict what's in the exact document.

Let's face it, Speaker: They got caught again.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Because your question is ridiculous.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This government is in complete disarray. Why should Ontarians trust them to do anything when they can't get their story straight?

My question, Speaker, is this: Which one wants to do the backpedalling today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Inspector Clouseau lives in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

I'll read the response from the LCBO; I think it will clarify it completely. "LCBO confirms earlier statements today by Minister Charles Sousa"—that would be me, Mr. Speaker—"that it has no plans to reduce the size of its 654-store network through the sale of LCBO-owned locations. In fact, LCBO is investing in expanding both the size and scope of its retail network to further improve customer service."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Let me read more from the document that contradicts all the public

statements that they made yesterday. These are direct quotes from the document.

The realtor would "determine the"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Come to order.

Mr. Steve Clark: They're doing the backstroke over there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is not helpful at all when I'm trying to defend your own member.

Please finish.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A direct quote: The realtor would "determine the highest and best use of the properties; perform credit checks on potential tenants; and coordinate all related activity with the tenant including move-in."

Speaker, they can say all they want about their plans now, and we've heard a few versions, as you've seen, but this document proves what they were planning to do.

Will the Premier admit today that her government got caught, again, trying to sell LCBO stores to bring one-time cash to make the deficit look smaller in advance of the next election?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I'm shocked that the member opposite, who prides himself on being a businessman, who takes pride in being a critic of finance, doesn't have a concept or a clue about the way business operates.

That's what this is all about. We're putting an RFP for brokerage services so that we can provide greater efficiencies in the service delivery of all of the real estate transactions, leases, rentals and buy-and-sell agreements. That is part of normal operations of the LCBO's 654-store network. That will continue. An RFP is put out there for public use; it's nothing private—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You got caught.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And so did the member from Nipissing. Come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Keystone Cops, right over there, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. This kind of to and fro that I just heard, because I heard it from the other side—regrettably, when I was ready to admonish one, I have to admonish the other. That's not helpful to the debate.

New question.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday I was in Kitchener and Brantford, listening to seniors who are worried about the Liberals' plan to nearly double the cost of prescription drugs. Most of the seniors I met were women. Many of them dedicated their lives to raising their families, and now they live on very limited fixed incomes. In fact, the median income for single elderly women in Ontario is \$4,000 less than it is for male seniors. The research shows that

elderly women also need more prescriptions each year. But the Liberals want to force these elderly women to pay more for every prescription they need, starting this

Everyone but the Premier can see that it's the wrong thing to do. These women feel vulnerable, but they are more than willing to fight; that's what they said to me yesterday. Will the minister admit that the Premier's plan to nearly double the cost of prescriptions won't just hurt seniors, but will discriminate against elderly women in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, I'm actually very pleased to get this question because the very individuals that the member opposite is referencing—single women, seniors in this province, who are having the most difficulty getting by—are precisely those that this budget will help, by bringing in 173,000 more of them who currently pay \$100 deductible for their drug plan each year. They will pay zero deductible. We're saving them a considerable amount of money.

But there's more that we're offering to actually acknowledge the difficulty that those poorest seniors face. In fact, this will apply to all our seniors. Previously, a pharmacist could bill for a prescription, including the copayment, on a monthly basis. if they chose to do that. You might get a prescription for three months but they would fill it only for one month, so you might be forced to pay 12 times over the course of the year. We're changing that. I'm happy to talk about that more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today is International Women's Day, and the Minister of Finance should actually recognize what higher drug costs will mean for elderly women. Our mothers, our grandmothers and the older women in our lives live on less money and they take more medications. An elderly woman living on \$20,000 or \$30,000 a year is not a rich senior. Already, she struggles every month and she simply cannot afford to pay more. This Liberal government wants to nearly double the cost of her prescription drugs and force many elderly women to cut back wherever they can. Yesterday, we heard this will impact a food budget for seniors, and it's on every prescription, just for them to stay healthy. This is a really serious issue, and I don't think this government is addressing it. You needed to consult before you brought in this change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Through the Chair, please.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Will the minister admit that the Premier's plan to nearly double the cost of prescriptions will hurt elderly women across the province of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: A lot of seniors were frustrated. They would get a prescription for three months from their doctor, they would go to the pharmacist, and the pharmacist would only give them a one-month supply but charge them the full co-payment of \$6.11. We've already made that change, where pharmacists now can only bill the

province on a quarterly basis, even if they give out the medicine monthly. There's no incentive to do that anymore. So we've reduced, in many cases, by 75% the costs to a senior or to, quite frankly, any individual in this province.

We have the most generous drug program for seniors in the country. In fact, the closest province in terms of out-of-pocket costs for seniors is twice what Ontario is. Ontario's average out-of-pocket costs for seniors are \$277 annually. The next closest is \$600.

I didn't get a chance to reference some of the provinces. In fact, out east in PEI, it's \$957 each year that a senior is expected to pay out of pocket. We have the most generous program in the whole country. We're going to keep it that way.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Today marks International Women's Day. I'm so proud of my two daughters, Kelly and Stacey, and my beautiful granddaughter, Carling, who is finishing her third year at Queen's University right now.

I'm also very proud to be a member of a government that takes women's issues so seriously. The minister responsible for women's issues plays an important role in our cabinet. She brings a gender lens to cabinet decision-making. She has exhibited remarkable leadership in the government's efforts to address gender-based violence and to improve women's economic independence and security.

1130

Can the minister please update the House on her progress on these initiatives since the last International Women's Day?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to thank the member from Barrie for this question. I also want to wish everyone in this Legislature, an everyone in Ontario, a happy International Women's Day.

We've had a fantastic year, Speaker, at the Ontario Women's Directorate. We've done that work with many government ministries. We introduced our sexual violence and harassment action plan to change attitudes, improve supports for survivors who come forward about abuse, and make workplaces and campuses safer. We launched a public education campaign that's reached over 84 million people, and market research shows us that this is having a positive impact on people's attitudes. This Legislature has debated the sexual violence and harassment action plan legislation, Bill 132, and I'm very excited about this bill being voted on after question period today. And we have a round table chaired by two wonderful women here on violence against women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer and for her work on the sexual violence and harassment action plan over the last year. I'd also like to recognize the work of the violence against women round table and its co-chairs since its establishment last March.

I know the minister has also been working with other members of cabinet on a number of initiatives that will make Ontario a safer and more inclusive province. These collaborations across ministries are important to ensuring that—

Mr. Paul Miller: Is this a question or a statement? I'm not sure. It sounds like a pre-cast statement. When's the question coming?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: —that issues that affect women are treated with the seriousness they deserve—in spite of the heckling across the hall.

Can the minister please describe some of her work across government to address these important issues?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you again to the member from Barrie for the question. She's absolutely right: We work with many ministries on this important file. To highlight a few: We partner with the Ministry of Labour to establish a steering committee to address the persistent and unacceptable issue of the gender wage gap. We've worked with the Ministry of Finance to establish the comply-or-explain amendments required for TSXlisted companies to report publicly on their approach to increasing the number of women on their boards. The women's directorate is currently co-leading the development of a human trafficking strategy with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. And just a few weeks ago, I joined with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and our Premier to announced the \$100-million strategy to end violence against indigenous women.

These partnerships are critical to our success, and we are committed to moving the women's agenda further and stronger so that women will enjoy—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Minister of Education. Last week, I asked the minister if she was prepared to guarantee that Sagonaska Demonstration School in Belleville would not close, and the first word out of her mouth was, "Yes." But over the weekend, we heard from union officials that the government is returning teachers currently on secondment to schools like Sagonaska back to their home boards for next school season—this after we learned last week that the government had stopped enrolment at the schools for the upcoming school year.

The minister can't have it both ways. I'll ask the same question I asked last week of the minister: Will she guarantee that she will not close Sagonaska Demonstration School in Belleville?

Hon. Liz Sandals: That's actually not the question you asked last week. What I said last week, and what I will repeat today, is that it is important to distinguish

which schools we are consulting on and which schools we're not consulting on, because there is a great deal of confusion. We are not consulting on the Whitney school for the deaf in Belleville. We are not consulting on the school for the blind in your hometown of Brampton. We are not consulting on the school for the deaf, Drury, in Milton. You asked me last week if Whitney would be staying open, and I said yes; I absolutely guaranteed Whitney would be staying open. We're not even consulting on it.

But what I have also said repeatedly is that we are in the process of consulting on the other schools, and no decisions have been made.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: We can rewind the tape, Mr. Speaker. I have it on my YouTube. Clearly, the minister said last week—the first word out of her mouth when asked about Sagonaska, was, "Yes." However, I had the opportunity to visit Sagonaska school last week. I met with parents, I met with staff, I met with the students, I met with the teachers. This school is making an incredible difference in our province.

Two of the students that I talked to last week, Mr. Speaker, should have been in grade 8 at their home schools but they have severe learning disabilities. In just a few short months after arriving at Sagonaska Demonstration School these students are now up to their grade level in reading. They're back up to grade 8. Miraculous things actually are happening at these demonstration schools in Ontario. One parent told me that Sagonaska school saved their kids' lives. It was an emotional visit to this demonstration school last week.

Because of this Liberal government's inefficiency in managing its dollars, it's putting the school at risk. Will she guarantee Sagonaska school will remain open?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member opposite is correct. The programs for very-high-needs students at the demonstration schools are, in fact, quite wonderful; I agree. I've been visiting the programs as well. They work with children who have severe learning disabilities, who are of average or above average intelligence and who are many, many grades behind in terms of their ability to read. But there is a limited number of children who have access to those programs, and what we need to think about is all the children in Ontario who are struggling to read. Because we know that the demonstration schools are serving literally 150 of the children in Ontario who struggle to read, we know there are thousands more there, and we—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. *Interjection.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

New question.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: In recognition of International Women's Day, I have a question for the Attorney General. Yesterday, the Attorney General refused to explain why the 2016 funding allocations for partner assault response include a 50% cut to the Windsor PAR Program and a 25% cut for Elgin. I'd like to list all the cuts that have been made this year but have been unable to get that information from her ministry.

Why did the minister ignore the advice of virtually everyone who understands what is needed to end violence against women and instead cut the only government program designed to change the behaviour of abusers?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you to the member for this question. As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, PAR is a very, very important program. Last year, over 11,000 offenders were referred to this program. We are committed to collaborating with stakeholders on a way to further improve PAR. What I said yesterday is that the PAR Program has been increased. Our government's annual investment in the PAR Program has increased by 47%, from \$7.2 million in 2004-05 to \$10.6 million in 2015-16.

We know that some service providers are concerned about the decline in referral rates and that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: A lot has changed over the 12 years that the minister refers to.

I understand that there is a stakeholder meeting coming up on April 20. I also understand that not a single representative from the sector has been involved in planning for that meeting, not even the minister's own partner assault response advisory committee. Given the minister's actions to date and the comments she has made, there are real concerns about her commitment to meaningful collaboration.

1140

Does this minister realize that her refusal to acknowledge the crisis in PAR is putting the safety of women and children at risk? Will she commit to honest dialogue on April 20 and guarantee that the meeting is not just providing lip service to consultation in order to make further cuts to PAR?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Funding allocations are based on referral rates and demands for service in each jurisdiction. It is readjusted. In some areas, if the demand is very low, then the budget is readjusted.

We have heard a lot of concern about this program, and that's why I have called a meeting of all our partners to come and tell us what is not working in the program and if there is change to bring about to the program. We are, of course, listening to our partners, because they

deliver the program. We are also consulting with experts on the topic of domestic violence. We will, I'm sure, come back with an improved program. This actual program will continue.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Since the first North American free trade agreements were negotiated almost 30 years ago, an export market has become one that you have to cross an ocean to reach. In 2013, Ontario introduced its Going Global strategy to help Ontario companies capitalize on global export trends and needs, compete more effectively and become more productive. That strategy helped new and existing firms large and small to respond to market needs in emerging export markets.

Our province has brought together Ontario private sector decision-makers and their overseas counterparts during trade missions such as the one on which I joined the minister in India this winter. Will the minister tell the House how Ontario will pursue international trade opportunities during this year of 2016?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity, and I also want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for asking.

The 2016 budget reaffirmed this government's commitment to jobs and economic prosperity. I was pleased to see that our budget addresses our needs in international trade by dedicating \$30 million over the next three years. This funding will allow us to continue our global trade strategy, to plan and execute Premier- and minister-led trade missions, and to continue to connect Ontario businesses with the world.

It also allowed us to host the Europe Global Export Forum in Toronto. The forum enabled Ontario's small and medium-sized companies to explore new market opportunities in Europe and connect with incoming buyer delegations.

The 2016 budget will allow us to continue to sell Ontario worldwide.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, western Mississauga has prospered through the outreach of our firms into high-skills and high-value agreements with firms outside Canada. One need only look at aerospace manufacturer Cyclone Manufacturing in Meadowvale as an example of a company growing at 20% per year and forging new agreements with European and Asian partners as well as its aerospace base here in North America.

The province's 2016-17 budget built upon the ground-work the province has laid during the past decade to attract international investors to Ontario and to enable Ontario firms to compete overseas. Will the minister tell the House how the measures proposed in Ontario's 2016-17 budget enhance trade opportunities for Ontario exporters, large and small?

Hon. Michael Chan: I'm very proud of the current budget. Speaker, \$10 million each year will allow my ministry to expand our trade opportunities—

Mr. Paul Miller: How are you doing with steel exports? Really well. You're doing really good there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Oh, no, actually, keep it going. I'll just remind the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek: The closer he gets to the chair, the easier it is for me to hear. Just to let him know.

Minister.

Hon. Michael Chan: It will be moving-back time.

As the member is aware, Speaker, our trade missions provide opportunities for Ontario businesses to connect with relevant investors abroad. Our mission to China in the fall of 2014 secured \$1 billion in investment, creating 1,400 jobs for Ontarians. Our follow-up mission to China in 2015 resulted in over \$2 billion in investment, creating 1,700 jobs. Our mission to India last month resulted in \$240 million in investment and created 150 skilled jobs.

DISCRIMINATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question's to the Premier. Today is International Women's Day, and while I'm proud to say that gender equality has come a long way since the first day of commemoration in 1911, this government has made decisions that have set Ontario back by decades.

This government, led by the Premier, has allowed two publicly funded colleges to offer courses at its campuses in Saudi Arabia, but women weren't allowed on those campuses. When asked about it by the media, the Premier denied knowing anything about it. The minister blamed the colleges and then blamed his predecessor. John Milloy said that the funding was approved by cabinet, which the Premier was a member of.

Speaker, can the Premier explain why those campuses were funded and why she couldn't get her facts straight?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Minister.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our colleges. Our colleges are among the best in the world. That's why they have been well thought of around the world.

The Saudi government put out a request for proposals throughout the world, and our colleges bid on those proposals. Algonquin College bid on two proposals: one for building a college for males and the other one for building a college for females. Their proposal for building a college for male students was successful. They are successfully operating in Saudi Arabia. Their bid for a female college wasn't successful, but they are going to bid again on building a college for female students, if the proposal comes up from Saudi Arabia.

Again, we are very proud of our colleges. They are very well thought of around the world, and we will continue our efforts to support our colleges.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, that doesn't make it okay, and the Premier should be answering this question.

Our students—in fact, all Ontarians—were shocked and disappointed that this government not only allowed but funded such a blatantly discriminatory practice. Because of a sheer lack of accountability, the government allowed a practice that shames our province and our values of equality and freedom. In this province and across this country, we know that boys and girls equally can achieve their full potential. The Premier has said that the government should be a force for good, yet she allowed our province's reputation—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —to sink back to the dark ages.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier allow such discrimination to happen right under her nose?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, we are very proud of the function of our colleges. For example, Niagara College has been active in Saudi Arabia for a number of years, and they have been training, actually, 120 female professionals to become medical/clinical administrative officers in Saudi Arabia, with the assistance of the King Faisal hospital. They have been active in Saudi Arabia, training male and female students, and we will continue to support our colleges.

Our colleges are doing a great job. Our colleges are training our students, as well as offering their services to other countries around the world. Since we came to office, we have increased funding to our colleges and universities by 83%. Per-student funding has been increased by 32% for our universities and 55% for our colleges, so we are supporting our colleges. Also, we would like our academic institutions to go global and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

1150

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of Labour.

Women in Ontario are still getting paid less than men. Women are still more likely to work in low-paid jobs and less likely to be promoted. Women are still getting paid less than men for equal work.

Nearly 30 years ago, the Ontario government passed pay equity legislation requiring equal pay for work of equal value, but today women are still earning up to 31%

less. Worse, racialized women, indigenous women and women with disabilities still face a larger gap.

Women deserve to see concrete action from this government, and our young women need to feel some hope. On International Women's Day, will this government stand up for women across this province and take immediate action to address the wage gap?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do want to thank the member for that question. It's an extremely important issue. It's great to see members from all parties in the Legislature today stand and rise and recognize International Women's Day. I think it says something about this chamber.

Women make up an integral part of our economy—I think we all agree with that—and society, but on average, they do not earn as much as men. What we've done about that is announced the creation of a wage gap steering committee. They've been active for the past year. They've been working along with the minister responsible for women's issues. What they're doing is, they're travelling the province and they're receiving advice from ordinary Ontarians, and those Ontarians who have expertise in this regard. They'll be reporting back to me with a strategy that's aimed at closing the earning gap between men and women in this province.

Speaker, this is an issue whose time has come. We're determined to build on the progress that we've already made in this regard.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Cindy Forster: With the right legislation and a real commitment to act, we know that the gender gap could be eliminated. This government talks a lot about the gender wage gap, but we've seen no action. Instead, women in this province continue to fall further and further behind under this Liberal government, a government that refuses to even comply with and enforce its own pay equity laws in many female-dominated workplaces and for professionals in education, health and many of the community sectors of this province.

Minister, it's 2016, nearly 30 years later. How can this government justify allowing the gender wage gap to continue to widen?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Quite frankly, Speaker, the answer is, we don't. We don't accept that and we shouldn't accept that, not one of the parties in this House. We should take pride. We're the only jurisdiction that I'm aware of, in this country, that is tackling this issue head-on. We're taking the issue on.

The gender wage gap is a complex issue. It's got many factors that add to it. We've heard from a diverse group of people across this province who share the same feeling as us: that this is unacceptable, that that gap needs to be closed, and that there shouldn't be a gap in the first place.

What this strategy is going to do, in a very factual way and in a very practical way, is propose recommendations that will close that wage gap that still exists between women and men in this province.

The short summary of the answer is that we agree with the member and we're doing something about it; we're the only province that is.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Labour.

Minister, over the past few weeks, I've constantly heard from the parties opposite about precarious work. I also hear from my constituents in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt and service agencies like Agincourt Community Services Association about unpaid wages, gender inequality and scheduling conflicts in their workplaces.

In my recent post-budget round table discussion, I heard from young constituents like Elaine, Nancy, D'Yuan and Kevin. They asked about stronger labour law protection and updating our current labour laws. These young people know that our government supports them and has a plan.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please update the House about what steps your ministry is taking to ensure that my constituents and workers across this province are protected and supported at work?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Once again, I want to thank the member for that excellent question.

Precarious work is a very, very important issue, and I'm proud of the early steps we've taken. To add to this, our government has tabled a budget in this House that demonstrates our dedication to creating good, full-time jobs in this province.

At the Ministry of Labour, we've got two excellent advisers. They've been working all year to ensure that those people who work in the province of Ontario have the right protections in place that reflect the modern economy. It's called the Changing Workplaces Review, and what it does is take into account that the workplace many of us grew up in simply isn't the workplace of today, and the legislation needs to catch up to that.

The budget also commits to support, as I've said previously, the gender wage gap strategy, because we know a wage gap exists there, and that adds further to precarious employment.

We're going out to the public and saying, "This isn't acceptable anymore. What do we need to do to change this?" We're getting some excellent advice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I'm very pleased to see that our government supports all workers in Ontario, no matter the type of work, its size or location. Residents and service agencies in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt are keen to hear from the minister when he receives both the Changing Workplaces Review interim report and the gender wage gap committee's recommendations.

Until then, can the minister please outline what the government is doing right now to help Ontario workers to not only feel safe at work but also understand their rights and responsibilities?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Again, I'd really like to thank the member for that question. The work being done by the Changing Workplaces special advisers and the gender wage gap steering committee are really just two examples of how the Ministry of Labour is making Ontario one of the best places to work, and one of the safest places to work, in all of North America.

Speaker, this government was the first government to proactively go out and inspect workplaces. We feel it's our job to make sure employers play by the rules and that employees know their rights when they go to work. These inspections are truly bringing in results. Since 2005, the Ministry of Labour has recovered approximately \$141 million in unpaid wages and other money that's owed to employees.

We know that educating people and bringing awareness plays a huge role in ensuring that Ontario workplaces are not only safe but fair. We have a website, and

I'd urge people in Ontario to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Last month, the government announced that they were creating a \$100-million fund so that homeowners using natural gas can more easily receive an energy audit and potential assistance on retrofitting their furnaces. The problem, according to the Canadian Propane Association and the Canadian Oil Heat Association, is that people who heat their homes with a propane or oil furnace are completely excluded.

For many people in northern and rural Ontario, natural gas is simply not available. Speaker, to the minister: Will they clarify this? Because I heard from the Deputy Premier today that they're going to make that program available to people who heat with propane or oil. Will the minister clarify today for the people of Ontario? Because if they're misunderstanding it, let us know. But if it is strictly for natural gas, then fix it and stop attacking people in rural Ontario.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Union Gas and Enbridge are finding the ways and means to ensure that the other types of fuels will be included in that program, Mr. Speaker.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the member from Ottawa-Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would just like to introduce two constituents of mine who are here: one in the gallery, Jean Hébert, who's here today; and also a paramedic from Ottawa, Norm Robillard. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Page captain Micah Joy Tamminga is joined today by her grandmother Catherine McLean; her grandfather, Malcolm McLean; her grandmother Jule House McLean; and her sisters Claire and Morgan. They're in the gallery today. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

AND HARASSMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats?

On Monday, March 7, 2016, Ms. MacCharles moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura Anderson, Granville Armstrong, Teresa J. Arnott, Ted Bailey, Robert Baker, Yvan Ballard, Chris Barrett, Toby Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bisson, Gilles Bradley, James J. Brown, Patrick Chan, Michael Chiarelli Bob Clark, Steve Coe, Lorne Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Dong, Han Duguid, Brad Fedeli, Victor Fife, Catherine Flynn, Kevin Daniel Forster, Cindy

Gates, Wayne Gélinas, France Gravelle, Michael Hardeman, Ernie Harris, Michael Hatfield, Percy Hillier, Randy Hoggarth, Ann Horwath, Andrea Hoskins, Eric Hudak, Tim Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Jones, Sylvia Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France MacCharles, Tracy MacLaren, Jack Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Mantha, Michael Martins, Cristina Martow, Gila Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McDonell, Jim McGarry, Kathryn McMahon, Eleanor McMeekin, Ted McNaughton, Monte

Miller, Paul Moridi, Reza Munro, Julia Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Naqvi, Yasir Natyshak, Taras Nicholls, Rick Orazietti, David Pettapiece, Randy Potts, Arthur Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sattler, Peggy Scott, Laurie Sergio, Mario Smith, Todd Sousa, Charles Tabuns, Peter Takhar, Harinder S. Thompson, Lisa M. Vanthof, John Vernile, Daiene Walker, Bill Wilson, Jim Wong, Soo Wynne, Kathleen O. Yakabuski, John Zimmer, David

Fraser, John French, Jennifer K. Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 94; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to correct my record. I believe that I might have said that the school for the blind is in Brampton, and I know perfectly well it is in Brantford.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members have a right to correct their own record, for sure.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my honor to introduce Vince and Espy Leitao, who are joining us here this afternoon. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, and welcome.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On International Women's Day, it's my pleasure to introduce to the House one of the greatest women I've ever met. My former constituency assistant and constituent, Nancy Clark, is joining us in the member's gallery.

Mr. Steve Clark: Good last name.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think "one of"—his wife is fine. Sorry. I could get somebody in trouble with that. That's official; it's in Hansard too.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2016

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise to congratulate everyone who helped Brockville's Rotary Park crack the top 10 in the Kraft Hockeyville 2016 contest. The competition has captured our city's heart. Of the 3,192 total Hockeyville nominations, a staggering 20% were for Brockville.

Credit for this remarkable response goes to Brockville's Young Professionals Network. Saturday night's announcement was the culmination of a goal they set since organizing a Winter Classic hockey weekend last weekend, and, boy, did they ever light the lamp. They've rallied our entire community using our national game to inspire people of all ages to dream big. The dream is to help the Brockville Rotary Park revitalization committee put a roof over our outdoor rink in downtown Brockville.

I was thrilled last month to play in this year's Winter Classic against the Montreal Canadiens old timers. It was an incredible weekend that scored \$41,000. Making Kraft's top 10 added \$25,000 more, but our work is not done. We're determined to make Hockeyville's number two spot and earn another \$100,000. Voting at www.khv2016.ca starts at 9 a.m. Sunday and runs through 11:59 p.m. Monday. As the saying goes, let's vote early; let's vote often.

I'm also issuing a challenge to every area employer with a computer at their workplace. On Monday, make sure your employees log on and vote all day to crown Brockville as Kraft Hockeyville. This is important. We're not only building to win this competition; we're building a better and stronger community.

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I just want to give an update to my colleagues in the House. I had the opportunity to tour southwestern Ontario last week as our party's critic for economic development, employment and infrastructure.

I talked to chamber of commerce members in Sarnia: Rick Perdeaux, Mark Lumley, David Moody and newly elected president and CEO Shirley de Silva. They have questions around infrastructure and some basic things that the province could do to really stimulate and open up markets with some enhancements to heavy hauling there. I'd love the government to take a look at that.

I met with Mayor Randy Hope in Chatham. He talked about infrastructure, he talked about economic development, and he talked about the Green Energy Act and the role that they've played in enhancing green energy projects in Chatham-Kent, as well as the cap-and-trade system, which they have some reservations around.

I went to Leamington and met with Bob Magri, who owns a greenhouse there; an amazing facility. It plays an enormous role in the economy in southwestern Ontario, specifically in Leamington. They have some questions around energy.

Then I went to Windsor and toured the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator and met with Arthur Barbut, who is the director. They want to know why the ministry has left southwestern Ontario out of the innovation corridor. Are we not innovative enough for this government down in southwestern Ontario? Why don't you bring it down there? There are a lot of great things: a lot of jobs being created there and a lot of partnerships stimulating, innovating and partnering with small businesses. I'd love the government to take a second look at that.

REFUGEES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with you and the House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

To all members: You've got somebody who wants to make an announcement. Thank you.

Please continue.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to share with you and with members of this House news of several events that have taken place in Waterloo region in support of refugees displaced by the Syrian conflict who have now settled in my community. This past weekend, a benefit concert called Music of Heart and Home was a huge success.

As you know, Canada has reached its goal of welcoming 25,000 private and government-sponsored refugees from the Syrian conflict to our nation. Here in Ontario, our goal is to settle up to 12,000 of those refugees. Kitchener is not the largest centre in Ontario earmarked as a settlement location, but we were selected because we're good at this kind of thing. We have people there with big hearts who are willing to open up their wallets to help those in need.

Reception House is the lead agency in my community. I have met with the coordinators there and can report to you that they are doing a fantastic job of welcoming these newcomers, helping them to find homes, getting their kids into schools and assisting them to adjust to life in Canada. To date, there are almost 1,000 refugees from this conflict who have moved to Kitchener-Waterloo.

A week ago, I had the opportunity to attend a Syrian women's potluck dinner. The food was delicious, and although there was a language barrier, we managed to connect using gestures and smiles.

While we hear some political voices say that they want to build walls, here in Ontario I'm proud that we are building bridges to welcome people who are going to make Ontario a better place to live.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Todd Smith: Just over a week ago, the Environmental Review Tribunal set up by the Liberal government denied approval to a wind turbine installation in Prince Edward county because it would cause "irreversible harm" to the local ecosystem. A hearing to see if the harm can be lessened has yet to occur, but that hasn't stopped the German-owned company behind the project. They have informed locals that they intend to start clearing trees next week, regardless of what the government's environmental experts have said.

Why won't the government defend the environmental review process taxpayers have paid for and direct the company that no work be started until it has actually got approval from the ERT? The government is allowing wpd to ignore environmental approvals in a way that it would sue any other company for. Environmental experts, including those at the MNR, have said that this project will cause irreversible harm to several species at risk.

Why is it that we have yet another Liberal program where the rules only apply to the people the government wants them to apply to? The people of Prince Edward county deserve to know if the Premier will enforce the ruling of her government's own environmental experts, or will she admit that if you're a company this government likes, the rules don't really apply to you? Residents have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for their legal fees, and they've defeated two projects at the ERT.

I'm calling on the government to stay any construction on the south shore and stand with the people of Prince Edward county. The law is the law, Mr. Speaker.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This morning, I held a media conference to present Jonathan's Law. Jonathan's Law will make it possible for an employee whose child has died to have an unpaid leave of absence for up to 52 weeks. Currently, parents are entitled to a leave while a child is critically ill or if a child dies as the result of a crime. But when a child dies as a result of illness or accident, the parent is supposed to be ready to go back to work after 10 days.

The bill is named Jonathan's Law in tribute to Jonathan Leitao, who died of cancer in 2014. He was 16. Jonathan's father, Vince Leitao, and his mother, Espy Leitao, were part of the media conference this morning, and they spearheaded the work to pull together this bill.

I want to thank Jonathan Miles and Meighan Ferris-Miles, also bereaved parents of their very young son, and thank Carolyn Baltaz, who is the chair of Bereaved Families of Ontario. I thank all of them for the work they did to do the background research, pull together the law and show great courage and composure when presenting this to the media this morning.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to stand in the House today first to wish everybody a happy International Women's Day and to highlight another great event that took place in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Last night at the Newmarket Seniors' Meeting Place, I had the privilege of recognizing 12 women and girls from across the riding as part of the Leading Women/Leading Girls Building Communities Recognition Program. The night was filled with testimonials from people who nominated the recipients, music from our young local talent and good cheer.

1510

This program recognizes women and girls whose leadership and initiative inspire and motivate the lives of girls and women in our communities. These incredible recipients inspire everyone they meet. They're positive role models to not just women and girls, but men and boys in the community as well.

I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate the eight women and four girls from Newmarket–Aurora who received this award last night: Beverly Varcoe, Robin Taylor-Smith, Nancy Black, Jennifer Copely, Lexi Benlolo, Amanda Benlolo, Sanam

Juliette Mojgani, Cheryl Fraser, Lianne Schiavo, Melanie Bell, Manon Labrecque and Vivian Risi. Thank you to each and every one of you for your time and dedication to making our community of Newmarket–Aurora a better place. You truly are an inspiration to us all.

I'd also like to thank Debra Scott, the president and CEO of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce, for her fantastic emceeing job last night. I look forward to an

event next year that's even bigger and better.

HURON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today, I am proud to recognize the accomplishments of Huron county's economic development strategy. Over the past year, these initiatives have helped strengthen the economic and

collaborative partnerships of my community.

Last spring, the Huron county economic development board and Huron county council partnered to support a county-wide strategic planning process—one of a kind. Since then, 10 municipal partners in Huron county have helped to identify economic development opportunities and have introduced priorities, goals and activities in a consistent and coordinated manner.

This collaborate approach has brought together municipal stakeholders with community organizers, and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs have done a tremendous job facilitating the whole initiative.

These partners have worked tirelessly to help develop relationships of trust and support, foster leadership, streamline economic development and explore ideas for a

collective impact.

This strategy has already gained attention from industry leaders and other Ontario municipalities. At the OGRA/ROMA conference, for instance, local Huron officials enjoyed a packed house during their hour-long panel on the county-wide economic development strategy. More recently, the board updated Huron county about their progress and upcoming initiatives over a breakfast meeting. The breakfast featured guest speaker Laurie Guthrie, an economic development specialist from New Brunswick, who spoke about funding a global network to attract business in the region.

Huron's economic development initiatives will help communities grow into a stronger and more economically collaborative place to live, do business and call home.

RAE LUCKOCK AND AGNES MACPHAIL

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yesterday, I tabled my motion honouring two female MPPs. Today, on the UN international day of women, I want to recognize these important legislators: Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail.

Many of you know Agnes Macphail. She was the first female member of Parliament and one of the first female members of provincial Parliament in Ontario, elected in 1943 along with another colleague, Rae Luckock.

Rae was elected in 1943. During her tenure, she made significant contributions to women's equality and the environment. As the MPP for Bracondale, she passionately argued for equal pay for equal work. She advocated that women at home should be paid for their work in the house. She also predicted that after the war, women who had been working would not want to return to their prewar roles and argued that they would be able to continue their work.

Rae was also a person ahead of her time. During her two years in this chamber, she was outspoken on the issues of air pollution and forestry.

Agnes Macphail was a tireless champion of workingclass farmers and women. Elected in 1943, she lost in 1945 but was re-elected in 1948. Her tremendous career was capped off with the passage of Ontario's first equal pay legislation in 1951.

I want to conclude by saying that I hope we can soon honour these two remarkable women with a permanent presence on the grounds of the Legislature.

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I was delighted to recently announce, with Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario president and CEO Lawrence Barns, that LDAO has received a \$75,000 seed grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

This was exciting news for this wonderful organization, as the funds will be used to support their pilot LD@Home, a new web support service designed to assist Ontarians living with learning disabilities. The service will follow the model already available to support educators at www.LDatSchool.ca. The use of online delivery means that Ontarians won't be geographically isolated from tools to help increase their success in living with a learning disability.

Funds from the grant will be used to help with some staffing costs, website design and development, video production, and hosting fees for the website. LD@Home will provide that necessary link to the great programs that various chapters of the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario offer to support both parents and students in navigating the challenges they face.

LDAO is a registered charity dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth and adults with learning disabilities. They offer many resources, services, information, venues and products designed to help people with learning disabilities and ADHD, as well as parents, teachers and other professionals.

I'm very happy to have LDAO in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and I'm also excited that their new LD@Home website will offer invaluable insight and supports to marginalized youth and adults, as well as the families and friends who support them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated March 8, 2016, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

JONATHAN'S LAW (EMPLOYEE LEAVE OF ABSENCE WHEN CHILD DIES), 2016

LOI JONATHAN DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ DES EMPLOYÉS EN CAS DE DÉCÈS D'UN ENFANT

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 175, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 to entitle an employee whose child has died to a leave of absence / Projet de loi 175, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi pour donner aux employés dont l'enfant est décédé le droit à un congé.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The bill amends the Employment Standards Act, 2000, to provide that an employee who has been employed by his or her employer for at least six consecutive months is entitled to a leave of absence without pay of up to 52 weeks if a child of the employee dies.

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ MENTALE MATERNELLE

Mr. Anderson moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 176, An Act to Proclaim Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day / Projet de loi 176, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation à la santé mentale maternelle.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Granville Anderson: The bill proclaims the first Wednesday of May of each year as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day.

1520

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE WORKPLACE LEAVE, ACCOMMODATION AND TRAINING ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ
ET LES MESURES D'ACCOMMODEMENT
POUR LES EMPLOYÉS VICTIMES
DE VIOLENCE FAMILIALE OU SEXUELLE
ET LA FORMATION DANS LE LIEU
DE TRAVAIL

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 177, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of leave and accommodation for victims of domestic or sexual violence and to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act in respect of information and instruction concerning domestic and sexual violence / Projet de loi 177, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi à l'égard du congé et des mesures d'accommodement pour les victimes de violence familiale ou sexuelle et modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail à l'égard des renseignements et directives concernant la violence familiale et sexuelle.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very pleased to introduce this bill today, on International Women's Day. It is a bill to amend the Employment Standards Act to provide all Ontario employees with up to 10 days of paid leave if they or their children have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence. It also entitles them to flexible work arrangements in terms of hours of work or location of work and reasonable unpaid leave, if necessary. The leave must be used for purposes related to the violence, such as seeking medical attention, attending counselling sessions, accessing services from a rape crisis centre, women's shelter or similar organization, relocating, or dealing with police or the legal system.

The bill also amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to require mandatory workplace training on domestic violence and sexual violence.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I rise today to recognize March 8 as International Women's Day.

Les communautés de l'Ontario célèbrent la Journée internationale de la femme.

Communities across Ontario are holding celebrations all week. This is a special day, set aside by the United Nations every year, to celebrate the many diverse accomplishments of women and girls around the world. The Canadian theme this year is "Women's Empowerment Leads to Equality."

Speaker, we have come a long way in empowering women in this province. Ontario women are leading corporations, making scientific discoveries, excelling in sports and so much more.

When I look back to International Women's Day last year, I'm proud of all that our government has done to further empower women over the last 12 months. We can continue to fulfill our commitment to achieve gender equity, support economic security for women and keep women and girls safe so they can reach their full potential.

En 2015, le gouvernement de l'Ontario a dévoilé un plan d'action pour mettre un terme à la violence et au harcèlement à caractère sexuel.

One year ago today, we launched Ontario's action plan to stop sexual violence and harassment called It's Never Okay. This morning, we released a progress report on its very successful first year.

Phase 1 of the action plan's award-winning public education campaign, built around the Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp, showed a measurable increase in awareness about sexual violence and harassment. Results indicated a shift in attitudes and behaviours of bystanders, many of whom now better understand the importance of intervening safely.

In the fall, we launched phase 2 of the public education campaign built around the hashtag #ItsNeverOkay. The objective is to now remove any grey areas, so that Ontarians know exactly what constitutes sexual harassment and violence. The sexual violence and harassment action plan will increase safety in the workplace and campuses and provide better supports to survivors.

I want to thank all the members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Their good work in clause-by-clause has definitely strengthened Bill 132.

All Ontarians deserve to be free of sexual violence and harassment in their communities, on campuses, in their workplaces and in homes. If we are to empower all women, we must first stop violence against all of the women and girls in our communities.

Last month, the Premier announced Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and girls. This strategy represents a \$100-million commitment from the province to work with our indigenous partners to end violence against indigenous women. Walking Together lays out how Ontario and indigenous communities are coming together to end the cycle of violence and ensure future generations of indigenous women can live the way they deserve, with safety and respect.

We are also increasing empowerment through our Leading Women/Leading Girls Building Communities Recognition Program. This program encourages MPPs to recognize outstanding females who have made a positive difference in their communities. I want to say thank you to all the MPPs who participated in this program, and I hope you have a great local event celebrating your leading women and leading girls.

I also want to mention I'm proud that this province has taken action to increase the number of women in high-ranking leadership positions, including on corporate boards of directors. Ontario was the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop the comply-or-explain regulation. Since the introduction of regulations in December 2014, several other provinces have followed our lead.

Speaker, this province has other supports and programs to empower women—too many to list here in my allotted time today. Although Ontario has accomplished a lot more for women than a number of other jurisdictions, I know that we still have a long way to go before we reach our goal of full gender equality.

That is why we must continue to work together to reduce poverty among women, close the gender wage gap, broaden gender diversity in positions of leadership, and make sure that no woman or girl is in fear or experiences violence.

I encourage everyone in Ontario to support equality for women and the empowerment of women on this International Women's Day and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? Statements by ministries? Last call for statements by ministries.

Therefore, it's time for responses.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Today, I am pleased to speak on behalf of our leader, Patrick Brown, and our entire PC caucus in recognizing International Women's Day. It is the 108th anniversary, and in particular, the United Nations theme for 2016 is "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality." The UN's Step It Up initiative is a commitment to gender equality and that governments across the globe will address the challenges that are holding women and girls back from reaching their full potential.

Although we have made great strides, further progress is needed. The World Economic Forum produced a report saying that it would take until 2133 to achieve global gender parity—far too long, Mr. Speaker. There are steps that we can take now to help women and girls achieve their ambitions, to respect and value differences, and to develop more inclusive cultures.

The first International Women's Day was observed in March 1911. At that time, the right to vote, marital or property rights, and even the basic dignity to be recognized as a person were not afforded to women. Even now, in 2016, the struggle for equality is still a distant dream for many parts of the world.

Equality is about making sure that women, just as much as men, are afforded the same respect and opportunities. My female colleagues here in the Legislature, on

all sides, serve as great examples of the strides our society has made on all the possibilities that women can make. Women have real choices and real opportunities.

In Canada and in this province, the progress of women in education, business, sports, government and the arts has shaped so much of who we are. Having the choice to pursue an education is so powerful, as it paves the way to a brighter and better tomorrow. Girls are more likely to earn their high school diplomas on time and are less likely to drop out.

1530

A year ago, I said that I was optimistic and hopeful that we would see significant progress on a number of fronts on gender equality. Unfortunately, there is still a pervasive culture that is deeply rooted in misogyny and, quite simply, a lack of respect for women.

But I do want to recognize the progress we have made in the Legislature when it comes to dealing with sexual violence and harassment. Today we unanimously passed Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. It will receive royal assent this afternoon. Along with the #ItsNeverOkay campaign and #WhoWillYouHelp, these are positive steps forward, and I'm glad that we are dealing with this issue, because for far too long the stigma has made victims and survivors feel embarrassed, ashamed or, worse, guilty.

Since last year, the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which I was honoured to cochair, produced a report that had input from survivors, family members, advocates and workers in health care, justice and social support.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, it is also important to bring human trafficking out of the dark. It is an underground and fast-growing crime that disproportionately targets girls averaging the age of 14. It is time to say that enough is enough; our girls are not for sale.

While I am disappointed that budget 2016 did not provide specific funding to tackle human trafficking right across this province, I call on the government to do what is right and act now to create a multi-jurisdictional task force of law enforcement agencies, crown prosecutors, judges, victims' services and front-line agencies to coordinate and help these survivors.

We must also pass Bill 158, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, and say confidently that human trafficking will not be tolerated in this province. We all acknowledge that the crime is a crisis, not only in our province but in our communities and our neighbourhoods, and that combatting it is a priority. So while we wait for the government's strategy on human trafficking, these are steps that could be taken right now.

I want to conclude by congratulating all the female trailblazers for their dedication and commitment to advancing women's rights and equality. While we commemorate these efforts today and celebrate the progress we have made, International Women's Day is also a call for a commitment to see a better tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further responses?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm proud to rise on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party caucus, the only legislative caucus in the country that has more than 50% women in its caucus, to speak on the issue of International Women's Day and to talk about women's issues in a very focused and concentrated way.

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the gains that we've made together for women and girls. My colleagues actually have talked about some of those initiatives. But it's also an important time and an important opportunity to recognize how much more there is to be done towards building a province where everyone can truly share in the opportunities that we create.

As women, we need to stand in solidarity and recommit to achieving positive social change: change so that women are no longer blamed for the gender-based violence perpetrated against them; change so that women are no longer shamed and doubted when they come forward against their abusers; change so that the legal system actually protects women and doesn't revictimize them.

In Ontario in 2016, women still earn 71% of what men earn, and women are more likely to be precariously employed in this province. This inequity is disproportionately borne by racialized, indigenous and immigrant women—in 2016, Speaker.

We should never accept that any woman in Ontario has to lead her life in fear or accept fewer opportunities because of her gender. We should never accept that any woman in Ontario has to work three jobs for wages that still leave her family struggling to make ends meet. We should never accept that real action to improve the lives of women can be delayed any longer, put off for another day, another decade, another generation.

When Ontario's women succeed, we all succeed. When women and girls flourish, so do our communities. Together, we can build a province that improves the lives of women.

But the Liberal government must stop the cuts to programs like the Partner Assault Response program. They must stop ignoring the crisis of accessibility in child care, which keeps women at home and out of the workplace. They must invest in affordable, licensed child care for Ontario families. This would help women enormously, Speaker.

We can take real action on pay and employment equity if the Liberal government is willing to make it a priority. We can take real action to end precarious work. We can invest in shelters, affordable housing, transitional housing and supports for women fleeing violence. But it takes a government that's committed and willing to take real action.

We can recommit ourselves—women and men—to speak up and act to end violence against all women: straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or two-spirited.

By going beyond an inquiry, we can tackle the root causes of Canada's national crisis of murdered and

missing indigenous women. We know what's happening with indigenous peoples in our country and in our province. We know how many communities are on boilwater alerts; we know the lack of health care that occurs on reserves; we know the lack of quality housing that exists on reserves; we know the inability of people to provide the level of education that other children receive in this province on the reserve; and we know the challenges facing urban indigenous peoples as well. First Nations, Métis and Inuit people have not been treated well in Canada or in Ontario. Speaker, we can only change the outcomes if we change the root causes of those outcomes.

I believe that's how best to celebrate International Women's Day. We celebrate our victories and we celebrate the women upon whose shoulders we stand, while we strengthen our resolve to continue their work and achieve the dignity, safety and equality of all women.

On behalf of Ontario's New Democratic caucus, all the very best for an inspiring International Women's Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for the comments.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have many petitions that were sent in to us.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Julia.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Wayne Gates: "Petition to Stop the Plan to Increase Senior Drug Costs.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on April 1, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit plan;

"Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and a higher copayment each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy; and

"Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

"Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medicines that they no longer can afford and put their health in jeopardy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the government plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians."

I'll sign my name-

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

1540

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children:

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths ... lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas demonstration schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special education needs;

"Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstration schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and the hiring of teaching staff;

"Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstration schools and other essential support services;

"Whereas freezing student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind; and

"Whereas the situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstration schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential."

I'm pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Jessie.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition from the Barrie-Orillia area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches; "We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I wholeheartedly agree with this. I'll give it to page—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further petitions?

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Xavier.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Before I get into further petitions, I just want to remind members that if you have a lengthy petition, sometimes brevity is a sign of wisdom. I would encourage you to shorten it, if you can.

Further petitions?

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that was given to me by

JoAnne and Dan Vida, good friends of mine in the town of Ingersoll.

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act ... is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990, c. E.19, s. 3.; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over the northeast. I want to thank Mr. Rob Bailey from Hanmer in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

"Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa" have been eliminated; and

"Whereas there have been serious reductions at Ontario Northland, including the elimination of Northland's train services:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario."

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Sayeem to bring it to the Clerk.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"There is no right in law to guarantee the rights of grandparents to have a direct relationship with their grandchildren without interference;

"Whereas we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To request the Attorney General of the province of Ontario to enact laws, where in no case any person, without grave reason, interfere with the personal relationship between the child and his/her grandparents."

I agree with this and will pass it on to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000" emergency department "visits each year and experiences in excess of 33,000 visits annually; and

"Whereas the government-implemented Places to Grow Act forecasts massive population growth in New Tecumseth, which along with the aging population will only intensify the need for the redevelopment of the hospital; and

1550

"Whereas all other hospital emergency facilities are more than 45 minutes away with no public transit available between those communities; and

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Wayne Gates: "Nurses Know—A Petition for Better Care

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas providing high-quality, universal public health care is critical for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

"Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

"Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario has lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

"Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

"Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

"Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complicated readmissions and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

"Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

"Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario's ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average; and

"Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality, integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics."

I fully agree with this, and I'll give this to the page.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Robert Bailey: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition and will send it with Andrew to the Clerks' table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2016, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes / Projet de loi 173, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: In the little bit of time I have left, I'm going to move an amendment. I move that the paragraph beginning "That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 22, 2016" be struck out and replaced with:

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Wednesday, March 23, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., and Thursday, March 24, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the committee be authorized to travel to Ottawa, Thunder Bay and London for the purpose of public hearings on the following days and times: Tuesday, March 29, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6

p.m., and Wednesday, March 30, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Thursday, March 31, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 173:

- —Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and
- —That the deadline for requests to appear be 1 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, 2016; and
- —That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and
- —That each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members: and
- —That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 31, 2016; and

That the paragraphs beginning:

"That the deadline for filing amendments";

"That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 6, 2016";

"On Thursday, April 7, 2016, at 4 p.m., those amendments";

"That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, April 11, 2016"

be struck out and replaced with:

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 p.m. on Monday, April 4, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, April 13, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Thursday, April 14, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Thursday, April 14, 2016, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, April 18, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Clark has presented an amendment for time allocation of Bill 173.

It states: "I move that the paragraph beginning 'That the Standing Committee on Finance"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Further debate on the amendment?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House, but today it's not an honour I particularly relish because we are speaking to an amendment on the time allocation motion on the budget.

The budget is something that affects each and every Ontarian. There are some bills that go through this House that affect one region more than another or affect one stakeholder group more than another, but the budget is pretty universal.

It's deeply, deeply troubling to have a time allocation motion on the budget, particularly from a government that claims to be open and transparent. I had the opportunity—I don't know if this was mentioned in the House before—to go to a Who concert last week—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, The Who.

There's a song with the famous Who scream, "... the new boss. Same as the old boss." That's those guys. They claim to be more open and transparent, but this time allocation motion is another obvious example. Why it's so deeply troubling, from my perspective, is because I'm the whip of the third party. Being a whip isn't like some on TV shows. It's much more mundane—much more mundane.

One purpose of the whip's office, and that we take very seriously, is to arrange to have speakers in the House at the right time for prescribed bills. We also try— I'm sure all the whips do this—to make sure that everyone who wants to speak to a bill has that opportunity; we arrange the schedule. I can assure you, Speaker, that on the budget motion—on the budget bill; I've only been here four years, and sometimes I get motions and bills confused. But I can assure you that on the budget, every one of my caucus colleagues, including the member from Nickel Belt, wanted the chance to have a full discussion—and not for their own purposes. Each one of us in my caucus—and, I'm assuming, the other caucuses as well—the caucus members go back to our ridings and we talk to people. We listen to their issues. I believe that my main job, as an MPP, is listening to people's issues at home and bringing those issues forward. And believe me, Speaker, there are lots of issues with the budget, and issues that deserve to be talked about.

1600

With this budget, we've already seen a rapid-fire prebudget consultation, and the budget was released before the pre-budget consultation report was finished. So obviously, as far as an open and transparent government, that was a complete wash. Basically, they had no respect for the people who came to those deputations.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Not at all.

Mr. John Vanthof: None. Again, it's very, very troubling for a government that claims to be open and transparent.

Now we come to the budget bill. Again, every Ontarian, through their MPP, should have the ability to speak to a budget. It has already been shown that there are mistakes in the budget. The government has backed up, or is thinking about backing up. And there are many

more that could be demonstrated if the government actually allowed the members of this Legislature to do their job. That's the thing with the time allocation—this motion in particular—of a budget: They're not allowing the members of the Legislature to do their job.

Furthermore, the way they're structuring these time allocation motions, they're not even allowing public deputations. They're not allowing the public to—we've seen it with the pre-budget consultations, and now, with the time allocation motions, we're seeing that they don't really want to have any—what's the word I'm looking for?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Input.

Mr. John Vanthof: Input—criticism. This government does not want criticism, even constructive criticism. They like to talk about openness and transparency, but they don't really want it pointed out that, in some cases, there are things that could be done better. That's one of the issues: They really don't like criticism. So they're doing things like time allocation.

Most people in the outside world don't have any appreciation of what time allocation means. Four years ago, before I was an MPP, I might have thought time allocation was a good thing. It sounds kind of like you're managing your time. It should be called a "cutting off debate" motion—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's actually a guillotine.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, the guillotine motion. We've heard long enough, "Off with the head of the debate."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Remember what happened to Robespierre.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. The government is saying, "Oh, the debate is going somewhere where we don't want it to go, because we might not look so good. So, off with the debate." That's basically what a time allocation motion is. It may be good for the government of the day, but it's certainly not good for the province. It's not good for the people, particularly on something as far-reaching as the budget.

Yes, we disagree vehemently with a lot of things in the budget. The way it's supposed to work is that you identify where you can agree, you identify where you disagree, and, hopefully, you can make things work a bit better. But if you refuse to listen to the people of the province by saying, "The members can only speak for X amount of hours," you are—again the guillotine. You're saying, "That's it."

Again, we mention the way that the motion is structured. The PC amendment is structured a bit differently. But the way the government's motion is structured, it allows very little time for members of the public to make any comment in the committee process. The committee process is actually a very important process, if it's used correctly, because it gives the members of the public a chance, after they have had a chance to look at the bill, to make some informed comments. Hopefully, some of those informed comments could be put forward as amendments and the bill could be improved.

But what this government has chosen to do with the last few time allocation motions, and particularly the last

one previous to this with the PTSD bill—I forget what number it was, but a very, very important bill for those first responders and others who could be impacted by PTSD. The bill was structured so that the time when the motion was put forward to the time that you had to get on the list to be a deputant was so short that it was impossible for an Ontarian who isn't connected to a paid lobby group or deeply connected to the government to actually get on the list. That is not democracy, when there is so little time.

The way it should work, particularly on something like the PTSD bill, is that you want people in the public to be able to come forward and make a deputation. Even in this House sometimes you'll hear—obviously, you can see I'm not using speaking notes today, but a lot of people here read from speaking notes, and sometimes people will relate a life experience that they themselves have experienced. Those are actually the best ways to move policy. That's what committee hearings are for: to bring forward people who actually have had a life experience in something that is included in the bill and you think, "Wow. We never thought of that." There's no crime in not thinking of something. That's why the committee process was created. It has taken a lot of years to create our system, but that's why it was created.

It's the same with this budget process. Now that we've seen the budget, the way it should work is that there should be a fulsome debate in this House. There has always been time allocation since I've been here. I haven't been here very long, but I have been told that this House used to work without time allocation and actually the parties worked together. Sure, it was partisan, but the parties worked together. And you know what? Laws got passed, because this is a pretty great province. But no; the way it works now is that the government gets sick of constructive criticism so they just shut it off.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Never mind constructive—any criticism.

Mr. John Vanthof: Any criticism. But I prefer constructive criticism. We do our best to provide constructive criticism.

So now with the budget bill, with this time allocation motion prior to the amendment, the only thing that gives people any breathing room is that we're having a constituency week, so maybe somebody has a bit of a chance to get on the list. But if we hadn't had, by the luck of the draw—and that's all it was, the luck of the draw—a constituency week in between, it would have been the same MO: time allocation; mere hours to get on the deputant list; first-come, first-served.

The idea of first-come, first-served is also a big problem. To the people on the outside, you think, "Firstcome, first-served: That's the best way to do it." No. And why specifically with time allocation? Who here knows when a time allocation is coming? The government. When the government is the only one who really knows when the time allocation is coming and they put such a short window on when you can apply to be a deputant, then first-come, first-served means that, conceivably, the government can have the list packed of all the people who are in favour of whatever they are proposing.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: We would never do that.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, and the government says they would never do that. Just like they say they're open and transparent; just like they told us when I first got here—remember those two gas plants they moved?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: I remember sitting in my seat with them telling me it will cost the taxpayers \$40 million—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Is that all?

Mr. John Vanthof: That's all it was going to cost, and it's over \$1 billion.

That's the problem. There is the possibility, in the way the government structures these time allocation motions, that they're loading the deck. They're fixing the game. They could be. They are fixing the game. If they really wanted constructive criticism, they would make sure that as many people as possible could go to these budget deputations—or any other deputation but specifically these budget deputations; that's what we're speaking to today—but they don't.

In my final couple of minutes, I'd like to speak to something about the Tory amendment. There's one part of the Tory amendment that I'm very in favour of—one part—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Which part is that?

Mr. John Vanthof: Where we actually get out of the fair city of Toronto.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Imagine that. Do you mean there's more to this province?

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm very proud of Ontario, and I'm proud of Toronto. I didn't know anything about Toronto until I got this job, but it's a great city. It has a few problems, but overall, it's a great city. I'm very proud when my wife's family comes from Holland and they come to visit and we tour them over Toronto because we're proud of Toronto. It's a world city.

But the other way: Ontario isn't just Toronto. I don't know if they think that, but they keep portraying that because, every time, with these motions, they have hearings where?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Toronto.

Mr. John Vanthof: Toronto. There's a big world outside Toronto.

The people outside of Toronto have different needs than the people in Toronto. You know what? I wouldn't be comfortable either if all budget deputations were made in Temiskaming Shores.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It would be great for Temiskaming Shores.

Mr. John Vanthof: It would be great for Temiskaming Shores and great for me, but I wouldn't be comfortable because the people in Temiskaming Shores don't have the same views on urban as rural.

By the same token, it's very discomforting, when we have these important hearings—and I'm going by the

belief that they are important hearings, that the deal hasn't been fixed—that they're always held here. They should be held throughout the province because it's the diversity of the province, Speaker, that makes this province strong. The more this government ignores the diversity of this province and the diversity of the people, the weaker the future of this province is going to look.

That is one of the things why this province has got troubles: because this government continues to talk about other parts of the province but continues, in action, to ignore them. By not holding budget hearings in the rest of the province due to these time allocation motions, they are demonstrating total disregard for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Any further debate on the amendments?

On March 8, Mr. Naqvi moved government of notice motion number 63. Mr. Clark then moved that the motion be amended as follows: "The paragraph beginning"—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense. Agreed? Agreed.

We are now dealing with Mr. Clark's amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye." All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

I have just received a vote deferral from the deputy House leader.

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to the government notice of motion 63 be deferred until deferred votes on March 9, 2016."

Vote deferred.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: For those of us who are starting to feel like this is "Groundhog Afternoon," it's not.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's John Vanthof, unplugged.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. I had the chance to start my 20-minute discussion on Bill 172, the climate change and low-carbon economy bill. In my first part, I talked about how we have been in favour of cap-and-trade for a long time. But the trick to cap-and-trade, or any carbon—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: The way to make it work—there are three pillars that need to make this work, or probably any—the word that comes to mind is "scheme," but any—

Mr. Grant Crack: Initiative.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'll use a Liberal term—initiative. It's got to be transparent, it's got to be effective, and it's got to be fair.

Yesterday, we were talking about how we don't know whether what the government has announced on cap-and-trade—particularly how they're going to increase taxes on gas and home heating fuel—is going to be transparent. The government says it's going to go into a separate account. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change says, "Well, no, there are regulations to stop that money from going anywhere else."

I would expect there would be regulations to stop the government from spending \$1 billion to move two gas plants, but those regulations didn't seem to exist.

An example I used yesterday was, I would expect that there would have been regulations that would have stopped Ornge Air from buying motorcycles to put in their lobby—Orange County Choppers—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Powerboats, yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, and a powerboat. You would expect that there would be regulations to stop such things, but, obviously, there weren't.

So for the government to say, "Oh, no, don't worry, folks; there are regulations to stop this money from leaking anywhere else"—or from slushing anywhere else—why should people buy it? We don't. You want to make this transparent? Make it truly transparent: dollars in, dollars out—a separate account.

But I'm not going to focus on that so much as I'm going to focus more on the second and third pillars.

The second pillar is to make sure that it's effective. We hear the government saying, "We're going to get so much more money in, and then we're going to spend this money on green initiatives."

Okay, but how do we know these are effective green initiatives? How do we know exactly how much carbon these initiatives are going to take out of the system? We have seen no proof, no graphs. There must be a number: so many dollars per tonne of carbon, and if the initiative doesn't take out so many tonnes of carbon for this much money, it's not effective.

There was an announcement of a subsidy on electric cars. Great. Obviously, it's a green initiative. But have we ever seen any numbers on how much carbon this initiative is actually going to take out of the economy? No. We haven't seen that, and that's a problem. If people are going to be forced to pay to help remove carbon out of the system, they are going to need to see the proof that this carbon is actually being effectively removed with the money. What this government keeps saying is, "Oh, no, but we're only going to spend it on green initiatives." But that doesn't prove it's going to be effective.

Going back to one of my favourite subjects, those two gas plants they moved: You could say that money to move those gas plants went to make our electricity system better, but it didn't. You could you say that because two gas plants did get moved, right? So that could be.

1620

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A hell of a lot more money.

Mr. John Vanthof: That could be. But that doesn't mean that that was a good use of the money.

It's the same with this. You could come up with a great, big carbon-removal boondoggle that this money could go to, and it would be perfectly fine, according to the regulations, because there's nothing that says that we have to have a specific target we have to meet: this many dollars to remove this many tonnes of carbon. I don't see that anywhere. All I see is, "Trust us. We know what we're doing. Trust us. Trust us because we're the ones who came up with the energy system we have now. Trust us." And that's the problem.

Do we need to worry about carbon in our society? Of course. Do we need to put together a system to make it work? Of course. But it has to be transparent and effective—

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It's free, right?

Mr. John Vanthof: This has got nothing to do with that. It's going to cost, but you have to justify where you're spending the money, and we don't see that.

There was an announcement that there's \$100 million that is going to be administered by Union Gas and Enbridge as part of this initiative. No details, no justification on how much carbon this program was actually going it take out of the system, not even any details about who would actually qualify.

Because it's being administered by two gas distributors—I've got no problem with gas distributors, but there's still a big question about whether people with oil could get the money. It was clarified—"Yes, you will be able to qualify"—but how is someone on oil or propane really going to, on a province-wide scale, deal with the program administered by a gas company? Really.

With the gas company, they'll get a little flyer with their bill: "Here's the program." Enbridge doesn't have the oil customers in their database. In my riding, maybe in the Tribune, in the Speaker and in the Northern News, there will be one ad. You know what? That isn't equal opportunity. Again, there's no proof that this program is actually going to take out carbon.

The last point in my last five minutes: This program has got to be fair. Not only that; it has to be seen as fair. The first announcement of this program is, I believe, 4.3 cents on gas, 4.7 cents on diesel, some on natural and, I'm sure, on propane. Okay. That builds up a fund. But it's also a deterrent to use gas. That's part of the program.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Tell me, how is that going to work where I live?

Mr. John Vanthof: That's the problem.

I often hear the member from Etobicoke North talking about all the great transit programs that are being developed here, and I approve. But in Timmins–James Bay, in Nickel Belt, in Timiskaming–Cochrane, we don't have an option. When the gas price goes up to help with

the removal of carbon, we have no options. People who work at Walmart and have to drive 40, 50 clicks to get to their job and get back are doing their share, but see no return.

Furthermore, this government's policy on climate change—they like the big announcements. But if you actually look at what they do across the province—since I've been here for four years, we had a few things in northern Ontario that actually could be used to improve carbon. We used to have a train. The train kept cars off the road. You know what? We could have done a few changes to put a lot more people on that train. That is an initiative that would be fair for carbon capture. But what did this government do? Cancelled the train.

We were promised enhanced bus service to make up for the train. Again, we weren't talking about carbon four years ago, about that debate, but this government should have been thinking about it because they passed the first one eight years ago, I believe—the first cap-and-trade initiative. As bus routes are cancelled, you're giving people in rural Ontario, and specifically in the riding of the member from Timmins—James Bay, my riding and other areas, less options. You're talking about reducing carbon, but you're cancelling transit in parts of the province. That just doesn't make sense. That's not fair, Speaker.

We see nothing in this legislation that's actually going to make it fair for people. A lot of people in this province are having a very hard time just making ends meet. And you know what? They can't really afford to pay more for necessities. I have towns in my riding that you drive through—and I'm not going to mention which ones. You drive through and they're very friendly-looking; they're well kept. In some of those, 10% of the people go to food banks. In those towns, there is no public transportation. There's no more train. The bus service has been changed drastically.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought it was going to be enhanced.

Mr. John Vanthof: They can't pay anymore. I see nothing in this legislation—and this does exist in other provinces and other legislation—that tries to make it fair. We see nothing in this legislation that does that.

In my last little while, I want to talk about two parts of this province that could do a big change for climate change. One is forestry. Growing trees are carbon sinks.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But they're not counted in capand-trade.

Mr. John Vanthof: They're not counted in cap-and-trade

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Go figure that one.

Mr. John Vanthof: And you know what? Cut more trees, use more wood and plant more trees. That's one way, and that should be counted.

The last one near and dear to my heart is agriculture. Agriculture, right now, is—not according to the Environmental Commissioner—releasing carbon and it actually could be a carbon sink. Farmers would be very willing to help with that, but we have to be very careful that under

this initiative or scheme the people who are helping actually get some benefit, that it doesn't just become a big cap-and-trade market in the sky for aggregators and Bay Street—kind of like our investments, they go up and down and Bay Street makes money, but we don't—because then it won't work. It has to be fair for the people who are paying; it has to be fair for the people who can help, like farmers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I found the contribution made by the member to be very useful to the debate. As I say, I'm very pleased to see the that New Democratic Party in principle is in support of this legislation. I am intrigued and made happy by the fact that the official opposition, the Progressive Conservative Party, has decided that it too now is in favour of a carbon tax, as they would call it.

As I think I mentioned in the House yesterday—I wasn't sure if you were there, so I would share it with you now: The biblical road to Damascus is full of converts, I can tell you that. It's great to see the conversion taking place.

The member for Peterborough said to me, "I felt a tremor," so I phoned Environment Canada and indeed there was a 6.5 Richter scale report in Ottawa. I think it was the members of the Conservative Party in Ottawa falling off their chairs when the leader announced that. You probably didn't, Mr. Speaker, because you're neutral as the Speaker, but the rest of the party seemed to fall off their chairs when, having said earlier in the day that all the policy will come from the grassroots, they pronounced that in fact now the official opposition is in favour of a carbon tax. But I'm pleased by that. I think the member who spoke for the New Democratic Party is pleased by that.

1630

I think it's good to have a fulsome debate on this particular issue. It is an interesting issue. We all want to achieve a goal of ensuring that our environment is well protected, and the member has indicated his support for that. I certainly agree that there is always room for further opinion and debate in trying to make a bill even stronger. That's why I think a debate of this kind is very useful.

I want to compliment you on the excellent job you're doing in the chair, by the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Further questions or comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I certainly can't follow that exhortation, and I wouldn't try. I was looking around to see if any colleagues wanted to speak. I don't know of anyone who fell off the chair in Ottawa, so I'll get up and speak. I certainly didn't fall off the chair.

Anyway, I do want to commend the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane on his remarks. I think he covered a number of areas that are important, whether it's agriculture or forestry for carbon sinks etc. There is a

great deal of concern out there about this \$1.9 billion or \$2 billion that will be dragged in, so to speak, from consumers through this carbon tax.

One tangible way that they could make a real change in the environment and climate change is a bill being debated tomorrow in committee, Bill 76. It's a private member's bill. It talks about how we would encourage the use of liquid natural gas to power vehicles on our highways.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Whose bill is that?

Mr. Robert Bailey: That bill would be in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, I know him.

Mr. Robert Bailey: You've got to promote yourself.

To get back to the bill, it would actually do what the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane talked about. It would reduce carbon and improve the environment. Less than 3% of the traffic on the roads is large trucks, but they contribute—the jury is still out on this—somewhere between 20% and 30% of the carbon footprint—greenhouse gases—to the environment. If we went to liquid natural gas—it's positive; it's being done in Quebec and it's being done in the States—we could contribute very significantly to the reduction of greenhouse gases in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Despite the temptation to politicize the issue, I just can't do it because it is so, so important.

I think I'm a Gen Xer, if I fit in that category—I was born in 1977; I'm 38 years old. I want to tell my colleagues in the House—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's pretty young, I know, and I feel great.

My generation is tired of burning fossil fuels for our energy. We're tired of pumping gas into our vehicles knowing that at the same time we go from point A to point B we are polluting; we're killing the environment.

What we need is leadership at all levels—provincial, federal and international leadership. We've seen that come out of the Paris climate talks. The aspirational goal of limiting greenhouse gas emissions to 1.5 degrees on average across the planet has to happen.

Inherent in that goal is a massive transformation of our economic system. This is not simply about implementing levies on emitters; this is about a societal and economic shift only parallel to the challenges we faced as a planet in World War I and World War II. This is our generation's war, and it should be viewed as such.

The bill put forward, Bill 172, has to be collaborative. These ideas that will make up a functional mechanism to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and essentially save the planet have to be well thought out, they have to be well nuanced, they have to be consulted upon, they have to be fair, they have to be transparent and they have to be effective. That's what we're calling for. That's what we will work toward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm pleased to be able to rise in response to the remarks from the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

It wasn't something that we were necessarily expecting this week, that we might be approaching something close to consensus and unanimity in this chamber around this issue. That's a very welcome development.

The provisions within the bill that's before us talk to a carbon cap-and-trade system, which we know is an effective mechanism that other jurisdictions have used. We know that in other jurisdictions, a pure carbon tax or carbon pricing mechanism isn't actually working as well as the cap-and-trade mechanism.

I do welcome many of the suggestions made by the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane. Very well-thought-out, reasonable questions are being put forward, and we will debate them today. I'm sure that in his party we'll have unanimous support. In the official opposition, I suppose maybe there will be a free vote so that those members who support this can and those who do not will be able to voice their views on it, because clearly that's still a work in progress there, Mr. Speaker.

But this bill does move Ontario much further ahead than we have been. As has been laid out in another bill that's before the House that speaks to how some of the proceeds from a cap-and-trade system could be spent to benefit individual Ontarians and Ontario as a whole through the creation of additional infrastructure, public transit that takes people off the roads, reduces greenhouse gases, allows Ontarians to retrofit their homes to be more energy-efficient, reduce their heating bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions—that's all here before us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane for his final comments.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to acknowledge the Chair of Cabinet, the member from Sarnia-Lambton, my colleague from Essex and the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for their remarks. I hope that with this initiative we actually can have a fulsome debate and actually debate all of the issues—because this is a serious issue—and that we don't all of a sudden get time allocation. We need to get this right. We need to make sure that the money collected actually goes into programs that are transparent, that are effective and fair.

"Effective" is probably the most important of the three. We can all think of programs that sounded good in the press release and, quite frankly—and I know from a farmer's perspective—didn't work in the field. We can never afford to do that, but certainly with this issue we can't afford to do that.

There are ideas on all sides that could make this initiative work. There are ideas in other jurisdictions—not just Quebec and California but other jurisdictions—that actually could make this work. It's our sincere hope that the government actually takes the time to make a program that works as opposed to making a program that's

got lots of initial fancy press releases and turns out to be a bitter pill for many people in this great province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than 6.5 hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise. Deputy House leader?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, it's an important debate. The government wishes this debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to make it be known that I'll be sharing my time today with the member for Halton, the member for Newmarket-Aurora and the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

1640

Mr. Speaker, we all know that fighting climate change is a collective action problem. It has been recognized for years at the international level that deep cuts in global emissions are required to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The environmental impact of our economic actions needs to be properly accounted for and reflected in the production process.

I am proud of Ontario's leadership in the fight against climate change and the move toward a low-carbon economy. Electricity and heat generation, or stationary energy, as it's known, is the largest source of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions, making up nearly half at 46%. Recognizing this, Ontario took a bold step to completely eliminate smog-producing coal as an energy source. This has been the single largest climate action change in North America, and it has resulted in cleaner air for Ontarians and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to historically low levels. This action is the equivalent of taking the emissions of approximately seven million cars off our roads and saving \$4 billion in annual health care and environmental costs, preventing 668 premature deaths per year.

The recent landmark Paris agreement means that economies everywhere are now scrambling to catch up with us. As other jurisdictions work to eliminate their coal dependence and look at the renewable technologies Ontario businesses are pioneering, we are taking the next steps by introducing a cap-and-trade program that will reduce greenhouse gas pollution and foster a more innovative and dynamic economy. Simply put, a green, low-carbon economy is the future, and we need to act to take strategic and innovative actions and continue to lead the process.

In the past few years, there has been a significant adoption of carbon pricing in other jurisdictions. According to the World Bank's 2015 State and Trends of Carbon Pricing report, approximately 40 nations and 23 other jurisdictions have now implemented or have scheduled prices on carbon. These systems cover 12% of

annual greenhouse gas emissions, a threefold increase over the past decade, and have a value of just under US\$50 billion in 2015, \$34 billion of which is from emissions trading systems. Recent major entrants include Korea's cap-and-trade program, which entered into force on January 1, 2016.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Korea.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: That's right, folks, Korea.

China, the world's fastest-growing major economy, recently announced it will implement a national cap-and-trade program in 2017, building off of the seven regional pilot programs that have been operating since 2013-14. Closer to home, Manitoba has announced its intention to implement a cap-and-trade program and link it with Ontario, Quebec and California under the Western Climate Initiative.

I want to emphasize that every jurisdiction that has introduced carbon pricing has seen economic growth. During the past two years, California's overall economic growth was higher than the national average, and the state's green economy grew even faster. California added 491,000 jobs, which was a 3.3% growth, compared to the national average growth rate of 2.5%. Overall, California's economy produced approximately 6.6% less greenhouse gas emissions for every dollar of GDP in 2013.

Mr. Speaker, inaction on climate change is not an option. The costs are far too great. We have already seen an increase in extreme weather incidents, which have devastating impacts for individuals and our economy as a whole. Without immediate action, we can expect that insurance and repair costs will only increase with the degradation of our environment. We need a long-term framework for climate action, and Bill 172 will do just that. Every dollar from the cap-and-trade program, estimated initially at \$1.9 billion, will be invested in green projects and programs, such as alternative energy, conservation and transit infrastructure.

I am so proud to say that my community of Kingston and the Islands recognizes the need for opportunities for a low-carbon economy. The city of Kingston has committed to becoming the most sustainable city in Canada, and with the help of our local partners, such as Utilities Kingston, Sustainable Kingston and Switch, we are well on our way.

The Minister of Energy was just in Kingston yesterday to recognize the community as a leader in conservation. There are so many initiatives already under way, such as the Kingston community energy plan project and Green Economy Kingston, to help residents, businesses and our local economy reduce costs, grow our competitive advantage through sustainability and build on the success of the many clean energy opportunities in place in our community.

I'm happy to support Bill 172 for the sake of our environment, our economy and the future of our children and grandchildren. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for her thoughtful comments just now.

I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 172, our government's new stand-alone bill on climate change. I am proud that Minister Murray and this government have put forward the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. This legislation is a long-term investment in the future of our province and our children. If we want the next generation to inherit a safe and healthy Ontario, then we have to act now.

Let's talk a little bit about the effects of climate change. The effects of climate change are far-reaching. It affects our personal health. It affects our water resources, our wildlife and ecosystems. It affects our life, the lives of our friends and neighbours, and the lives of our children.

In my riding of Halton, I'm proud to say that we have many businesses and community leaders who understand the importance of tackling climate change. Halton is agriculturally diverse, and we must take the necessary steps to protect and maintain it. For example, the Halton Environmental Network highlights green businesses and organizations in and around my riding, and makes sensible decisions and encourages those decisions with our planet's future in mind. Organizations such as MiltonGreen focus their time on encouraging companies and individuals to think of the environment first. In fact, both groups have spoken to me about climate change.

While groups such as these are already doing important work, it is crucial that we do our part. The world's leading scientists are urging governments to act quickly to limit global warming, and our government is listening. In fact, our position has always been clear. There has been no flip-flopping on this side of the House.

Bill 172 sets a long-term framework for climate action. It helps fight against climate change by giving polluters an important incentive to cut greenhouse gas emissions. This bill would implement a cap-and-trade system then reinvest the proceeds into green projects and initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. In this new carbon market, companies would have real incentive to reduce harmful emissions and invest in cleaner technologies. By capping the amount of allowable emissions, companies would either have to lower their output or buy carbon credits from someone who did. As more and more businesses move toward cleaner production, the cap on emissions would be reduced each year; just think about that

Why are we doing this? Because everyone wins. The result would be a cleaner environment and increased investment in clean technology, innovation and jobs, and a stronger future for our children. This bill takes an approach to tackling climate change that has been proven in both California and Quebec. The approach is one that we know is winning there. The province is working closely with these jurisdictions to link our carbon market with theirs. By doing so, Ontario will gain access to the largest carbon market in North America; there is no

doubt in my mind that this will be an asset to our province.

In addition to implementing the cap-and-trade program, this bill reinforces the government's existing climate change action plan.

1650

Bill 172 will reaffirm emission reduction targets and provide accountability by publishing action plans and progress reports. This bill ensures that our government has a well-thought-out plan.

Mr. Speaker, good climate policy is good economic policy and good people policy. The time to act is now. The future of our children depends on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have listened thoughtfully to the concerns of the members for Halton and Kingston and the Islands, as I have to the rest of the members who have spoken here today about this most important and very crucial legislation. What I'd like to do for the few minutes I have is just focus on a couple of areas and maybe a bit more of an upbeat take on what is happening here.

I wanted to start off by agreeing that this is the battle of our generation and that we certainly have to do something about greenhouse gas emissions. This is not something we can put off for another year or another 10 years. The time is now to take some pretty drastic and some pretty important steps to begin to address the major concerns. But what I've noticed out there is that there has been, we'll say, a bit of greenhouse gas burnout with some individuals; people are feeling a bit overwhelmed and perhaps a bit pessimistic that anything could be done.

I was delighted to see that 10 years after publishing his documentary, An Inconvenient Truth, Al Gore has stepped forward this past month—I think it was about February 16—and put on a 22-minute Ted Talk that you can find on the Ted Talk website. I believe it was in Vancouver, actually. The first half of his discussion is the usual introduction to greenhouse gas issues and carbon issues and the dire consequences if we don't act, but what's interesting is the second half of his documentary. It's very positive. Al Gore now believes we can beat this. We have to work at it, and there will be some major issues that we deal with, but we can now beat this. He looks, for example, at the implementation of modern technology like the uptake of LED lighting and the number of coal-fired plants around the world that are being cancelled—new ones being cancelled; old ones being shuttered.

It's a very optimistic, or far more optimistic, view about the world than he had 10 years ago. I would commend anyone who is feeling a bit burned out and overwhelmed to see what Al Gore has to say, and they'll feel a lot more positive.

When it comes to our piece of legislation, I'm hearing wonderful agreement about the need to deal with carbon and greenhouse gas emissions, and that's absolutely wonderful. It's wonderful to hear about the conversion on the road to Damascus from a few members opposite, that they're now on board and agreeing that it is a problem.

We have to talk about solutions. When I first looked at possible solutions, I heard what our minister had to say, I heard what others had to say and, frankly, I did a lot of my own research and my own reading, and talked to a lot of the experts I know who live in my riding. I agree with our government's position that cap-and-trade really offers a very exciting opportunity for business and for individuals. This is an opportunity like we haven't seen before to not only do the right thing but to build a green economy.

I know there are concerns, and I was glad to see in legislation that all of those funds collected must be spent on projects that reduce our carbon footprint. I was very happy to see that. But what happened when we started talking about cap-and-trade in my riding was the number of companies that came to see me. Some of them are start-ups; some of them are multi-billion-dollar institutions right now. All of them are working on solutions that would really benefit from cap-and-trade. Not only are they doing the right thing for the right reasons; they're also doing things that create jobs and create investments in my riding and in Ontario. I think they are the embodiment of some of the positive things that will happen as we move into cap-and-trade and use that system to stimulate a green economy and to make sure that not only do we fix the problem, but, at the end of the day, that Ontario's economy is much stronger.

I know there are a lot of things that the province will be doing. My time has pretty much run out. I just wanted to leave us on a more optimistic perspective in terms of good things that are being done, and there are more things coming.

I will turn the floor over to the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell to finish up on our side.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. Grant Crack: What an honour it is for me to rise this afternoon and represent the great people of the riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. It's not an easy task to follow the member from Kingston and Islands, the member from Halton and especially the member from Newmarket—Aurora, but I'll do my best.

I was really proud last March to be able to put forward a motion in this House on March 12—as a matter of fact, almost one year ago today—just asking the House to recognize that climate change was real. At that time, during my 12-minute presentation, I had a quote from David Suzuki from his website. He stated, "The debate is over about whether or not climate change is real." That proved to be the case, as the entire House here actually supported the motion that I put forward. I had the privilege of having a press conference with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change that morning, which went very well.

I wanted to bring up some comments, perhaps, that the critic of the environment portfolio from the opposition had stated in her response. She said, "I have to be clear in

stating that implementing a carbon tax does not achieve" the goals related to carbon reduction. All of a sudden, we hear that the Leader of the Opposition now is saying, "We have to do something about it, and that something includes putting a price on carbon." So there has been a change of heart on the other side. That's why I put forward the motion, to begin talking about this important issue, and it's good to see that all members of the House specifically speak in favour of what we're attempting to do.

I can understand the concerns that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane mentioned in his address. He's concerned about transparency. I think we've pretty well made it clear; the Minister of the Environment will speak on this some more, I'm sure. It's right in our budget, on page 27, what we're going to be doing and what the impacts are going to be. We're saying that there is going to be an impact on the cost of gas across the province of about 4.3 cents per litre. We know that there's going to be an impact on natural gas of about \$5 per household. It's right there. That's transparent.

We've also committed to reinvesting some of the funds that we're going to receive into my favourite, the \$100-million retrofit program for homeowners. We'll be able to take advantage of a program that they've been asking for for years, that I could have benefited from, that people I know could have benefited from over the years had our government of the day taken this initiative.

I'm very proud that our government and our minister have taken leadership on this particular file. It's not easy, Speaker. Nobody wants to pay more for gas. Nobody wants to pay more for natural gas. That's just normal. But it's great to see there is a consensus here that we have to do something, that the people of Ontario respect the fact that we're all going to have to contribute in doing our part and showing that leadership in reducing the impacts of climate change that I know are going to impact rural Ontario, our agricultural community and our business community to an extent that we don't really comprehend at this particular point.

I want to thank you for the privilege of speaking today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

1700

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I just want to make a quick comment on some of the presentations that were made.

I want to say from the outset that yes, climate change is real and yes, we need to do something about it. The challenge we have here is that this bill talks more about the money we're going to collect than the things we're going to do to actually reduce the carbon footprint in our province.

We're told that this is all covered in bill whatever-it-is in the budget and this is how we're going to do it. I've been around here long enough, Speaker, to realize that the first budget that this government—under a different leader, but this government—came out with, they were going to collect a health tax and they were going to put it

all into health care. But where did it go? The first thing we heard, it was grants given to infrastructure. When they were questioned about, "Well, how do you put a health tax into building infrastructure?", they were very clear about it: "Of course, clean water is important for good health, so that money is going to health care."

This is the type of thing that I think we, on this side of the House, worry about: \$1.9 billion a year that they're going to put in the kitty. They're going to, as we just heard from the member opposite, put some of that into trying to reduce carbon. The rest of it is going into the slush fund that they're going to spend on whatever they see fit, and I think that's wrong.

Now, the other part about reducing the carbon footprint: I know the people in my riding now are not purchasing gas because they want to go places; they're purchasing gas because they have to go places. Do you believe, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to purchase less gas because they have to pay another 4.3 cents on that litre? No, they're not going to purchase less gas. They're going to purchase less of other things, things they can't pay for anymore because of the high hydro rates and the extra money they have to pay on gas. None of that will help the carbon footprint that we have. That's what I think is wrong with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: In the interest of transparency, let me just focus in on one aspect of the bill, and that's that the government wants to appoint a private agency to oversee the implementation of the cap-and-trade initiative.

Now, we saw that when they started selling the shares of Ontario Hydro, by putting it into private hands, they took away any oversight that we used to have from the Auditor General, from the Financial Accountability Officer, from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. They have no oversight now on Hydro One—none at all.

That's what's going to happen when they have this private panel to oversee this cap-and-trade initiative. That's the wrong way to go about it. You should change that. I mean, the bill has a strong foundation, but it needs to be changed. You can't have a private panel. You have to have public access to that information. The public needs to know how much money is being collected, where it's being spent on climate change initiatives, what impact it's having and are there other things we can do? You have to justify to the people who are paying that extra price at the pump that this is a public document overseen by the legislative experts, the people we pay for accountability in this House: the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer and the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

I heard the member from Newmarket–Aurora just talk about LED lighting. I have nothing against LED lighting. I'll just mention that, recently, in Windsor there was an accident. A school bus went through a red light because snow had plugged up the red light so it was blocking it,

because LED lighting doesn't emit enough heat to melt the snow when it lands on the traffic light.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my colleagues this afternoon who made a significant contribution to the debate: the members from Kingston and the Islands, Halton, Newmarket–Aurora and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I think it's quite true that all 107 members of this Legislature now realize and have come to understand that climate change is, indeed, a serious problem. I know that in my own community of Peterborough, in 2002 and 2004 we had two 100-year storms within a two-year period. That's a good indicator. Whether you look at Calgary, whether you look at all communities in North America that have seen violent weather conditions that have wreaked havoc on their respective communities, they know that climate change is indeed very real.

The challenge for all of us today is to move from a disaster management perspective to a disaster prevention perspective in terms of climate change, equipping our municipalities—rural municipalities and larger urban municipalities—to make sure that they have the tools in place to deal with what might come down the road in terms of climate change. So we look at the proceeds from the auction to reinvest into a wide variety of initiatives—and 100% of those proceeds will be reinvested.

But I want to talk about agriculture for half a minute. Agriculture represents about 6% of the GHGs in the province of Ontario but has a unique opportunity to punch well beyond its weight in terms of climate change. If you look at carbon sequestration, we're into a process right now of soil management—my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—the fourplan review and the GreenUP, all very positive initiatives to allow us, particularly in terms of preservation of farmland and other initiatives, to really have agriculture in the forefront when it comes to the battle against climate change.

Mr. Speaker, we are all in this together, and it appears that there might be a consensus forming in this Legislature to address this with very positive, responsible legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Lanark, Addington, Lennox, Frontenac and—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: And whatever else is out there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): —other parts unknown.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I just want to comment on two explicit points that were raised by the Liberals as they shared their 20 minutes. They couldn't find 20 minutes for one person to speak about the bill; they had to share it up between four.

The first one was by the member from Newmarket–Aurora, and this is insightful to what is really behind this bill. He said that this bill creates exciting opportunities for business—exciting opportunities for business. He

didn't talk about greenhouse and climate change; he talked about exciting opportunities. This is what we often see with Liberal bill:, that they're rigged—rigged—to provide benefits to a few people at the cost of a great many people. So I'd like to see if the member from Newmarket—Aurora will get up and just tell us exactly what businesspeople in Newmarket—Aurora are going to benefit from this hocus-pocus bill they have in front of the House today.

The other one, Speaker, was the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, and his comments were insightful as well. He said, "We will reinvest some of this money." Okay, \$1.9 billion in new revenues for this government, and the member from GPR says, "We'll reinvest some of this money." I guess all the rest of it will go over to the member from Newmarket-Aurora's friends in business in his riding or elsewhere—other Liberal members who will enjoy and reap the benefits of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Newmarket-Aurora for his final comments

Mr. Chris Ballard: It's my pleasure just to make a few final comments. It's so refreshing to hear, Mr. Speaker, all parties agree that climate change is real, that excess carbon in the atmosphere is the reason and that that excess carbon is there because of things that we as the human species have done in the past, especially the past 75 or 80 years. It's now refreshing to hear that there needs to be a tax on carbon and that we have agreement with members opposite for that.

I've often wondered, Mr. Speaker—we pay, as citizens, to dump our pollution in lakes when we flush our toilets, or whatever goes down our sinks and enters the water stream. We pay to have that cleaned and put into the water. But we think that we have a free ride when we put pollution in the form of carbon into the atmosphere, something that we all breathe. It's about time, Mr. Speaker, and the time has arrived, that we understand that that form of pollution, carbon pollution, is one that we have to deal with, and deal with right now.

But I just wanted to talk about the economy and capand-trade for a second. I had an interesting conversation with an economist from California who talked about the pace of growth of the California economy when their cap-and-trade was put in place, and it has exceeded the growth across the United States. It's phenomenal, and it is directly tied to the beginnings of cap-and-trade. In fact, the number of jobs in California grew by 3.3% when the national average was only 2.5%. So there are a lot of positive benefits to this piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much, Speaker, for getting all those words strung together in just the right way.

Last week, I was in this House speaking about the budget, and I referenced a column by Jack Mintz, who

suggested that politicians were rigging the system. I don't know if anybody remembers that debate, but that's what he called it, that politicians were rigging the playing field for their friends, for their business partners, such as the member from Newmarket–Aurora, at the expense and to the detriment of people who actually vote and who we're actually elected to represent. I see Bill 172 as just a furtherance of this rigging.

This is really a bill that attempts to use stealth to hide the Liberals from the outrage from the people of Ontario, and they are using the language of the environment to camouflage this attempt to cover up their budget shortcomings, their malfeasance, their mismanagement, their scandals. That's what this bill is all about. It's a purposeful camouflaging of their failings, using environmental

language.

Speaker, they call it cap-and-trade. We know cap-and-trade has two parts to it. It's like any other ledger, any other balance sheet: There's a give and take. This bill only has a take. That's all it does: It takes from people. It doesn't have that corresponding offset to it. As I said earlier, the member from GPR said we're going to reinvest "some of" the money. How little? Well, only time will tell.

But the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane said in his debate about not recognizing the carbon offsets and the carbon capture that's happening, and truly, if this was a legitimate cap-and-trade program, it would be looking at the carbon capture that's already here in this province. To not look at the carbon capture, then it is only a cap-and-take program that this Liberal government is offering.

Let me just give you an example.

Ontario's greenhouse gases in 2013 were 11 megatonnes. I think even the Minister of the Environment could check his Twitter account and see if my numbers are correct on that, but 11 megatonnes. There are 85 billion trees in Ontario. According to Trees for the Future, a reputable source, each tree's annual carbon offset is 22 kilograms. That equals 1,870,000,000,000 kilograms, or 1,870 megatonnes of carbon capture: 170 times more than our emissions. So why is this government not looking at what is really happening in this province? Why are they not looking at that side of the balance sheet, that side of the ledger, and creating that as an offset?

Well, they can't take money from those ones. They can't capture any more revenue, and that's really what this is. It's not about carbon capture; it's about capturing more money.

I think, Speaker, we can see that, right now, the people of Ontario are paying about \$2.4 billion a year in taxes on our gasoline. Ostensibly, that is to improve our roads, our highways and our public transit. But we've seen our gridlock continue to get worse and worse and worse under this Liberal government, adding to those emissions. They have never—never—spent the money that they're collecting already in these gas taxes, in a meaningful manner, to improve transportation and public transportation in this province.

Now they're asking us to believe, "Hold on. We've got \$2.4 billion that we're taking from people. We're going to take another \$1.9 billion this time. But trust us this time. We are going to invest in public transit with this new \$1.9-billion scheme." This is a bill of hocuspocus and rigging of the playing field. We've seen this play time and time again—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Same old Tory story,

Mr. Randy Hillier: —and I want to just put it in this analogy for the people, especially the member for St. Catharines; he might be able to recognize analogies. The floor price keeps rising with this Liberal government, but the ceiling remains the same. They continue to squeeze everybody.

Just to give that in relation: From the budget numbers themselves, during the life of this Liberal government, our per capita individual income in this province has been pretty stagnant. It has risen by 16% over the last 13 years. During that same period of time, the per capita debt that this government has incurred on behalf of the people has risen by 44%. The ceiling stays the same; the debt and the floor prices and the cost of living and the cost of doing business keep going up, and people keep getting squeezed.

Now all we have to do is trust them this time. This time, they're going to invest the money wisely. They're not going to be involved in scandals such as Omge air ambulance. They're not going to be involved in scandals such as MaRS or OLG or eHealth or gas plants. They're all better. They've had an epiphany on their road to Damascus, that they are now going to be stewards of our financial house.

Well, Speaker, some people may buy that story; I certainly don't buy it. We've seen what happened with the European cap-and-trade program. We saw the fraud, the corruption and the malfeasance that happened in Europe when government and politicians got into the business of creating carbon credits and by having their friends and their business partners in Newmarket–Aurora be involved in public policy. We see what happened there: fraud, corruption and scandal.

Now, nobody would ever believe that would be possible with this Liberal government, right? They are lily-white, if not lime green. They've certainly got to be lily-white in their purity of intentions and objectives.

So \$1.9 billion: That's the cost of this rigging of the playing field, once again. This stealth camouflage of their true purpose with this environmental language—Speaker, I don't buy it. It's not a cap-and-trade; as I said at the beginning, it's a cap-and-take—cap-and-take and very, very little. I'm sure in a year or two or three from now, we'll be looking at the public accounts once again, and everybody will be aghast and astonished that all this money that was taken from people didn't buy us one new bus, didn't buy us one new LRT, didn't do anything other than curry favour with some business partners and friends who can spend \$5,000 or \$6,000 to go to the Hyatt hotel and have dinner with the Minister of Energy and the Premier. That's where we see the real actions of this government.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of the Environment on a point of order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: That is far outside parliamentary language. We're ascribing motives and I think suggesting corruption, which is not parliamentary, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'm listening closely and I didn't see the tie-in.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I accept the minister of hocuspocus's argument.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I will ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is always entertaining to listen to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. He is very good on his feet and very interesting to listen to. Although I don't fully agree with his position on this bill, I do share some of his worries.

I spent two very painful years of my life looking at Ornge, looking at something that was supposed to be so good for our province. Ontario was the best with air ambulance and, under this government's watch, with an accountability agreement, with all of the power in the world to look at how the money was spent, they looked the other way while Dr. Mazza got paid \$4 million. They looked the other way while a motorcycle was being bought with taxpayers' money. They looked the other way while powerboats were being bought with taxpayers' money. They looked the other way while this agency was being driven into the ground until there was nothing but ashes left.

When he says that he's worried that this \$1.9 billion that the government is going to collect is not going to have the right amount of oversight, transparency and accountability to make sure that the good people of Ontario get value for their money, I sort of know where he's coming from.

Those two years looking at Ornge opened my eyes to the ways that I never thought things like this were happening right here in Ontario. How could it be that all you have to do is put a Liberal-friendly guy in front of the parade? It doesn't matter if the whole house is on fire; they see a Liberal-friendly guy at the front and they say, "All is good. Keep on going, my son. You're doing great."

This is what happened at Ornge. I don't want this to happen with cap-and-trade. I want it to succeed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'll try not to join the race to the bottom here.

It's interesting: If you read the Financial Accountability Officer's review of this, he's endorsed it. He's very clear, because we have taken the decision to use a

regulatory fee that puts very severe restrictions on what this money can be spent on. Our standards are higher than even the well-recognized markets in Quebec and California, which were recognized by the World Bank and IMF as some of the most credible in the world, with the best oversight. We have a free-standing market.

We have a separate account, so everything is very auditable, reviewed by the Auditor General. The money comes in; the money goes out. We have also set a very high standard in the legislation in the action plans. We not only have to show where the dollars are going; we have to demonstrate what the estimated greenhouse gas reductions will be.

And actually, money can't be spent on things like transit; you could not go out and buy diesel buses if you couldn't, for example, demonstrate there was a GHG reduction. One of the things we understand, with 35% of our emissions coming from transportation and about 20% from housing—which is where our emissions are growing; they're down in energy and they're down in industry—if we don't get significant reductions there, then that burden passes to someone else.

This is also regulated independently. When we link our markets with Quebec and California, we will get a lower price because we have a larger market, it's more stable and we have the capital. To maintain investor confidence, you have to make sure there is integrity in the system. We watched very carefully the market, only a week ago, in Quebec and how that goes.

It makes us the fifth-largest economy in the world in that linked market. It also opens up incredible opportunities for Ontario companies to sell their reductions, when they get reductions, and, in the short term, they have a large, stable pool to buy allowances in. That's what the trade part is, and that keeps costs down.

When I get a chance to speak later, I'll get into more detail.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to comment on the remarks from the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and also Nickel Belt.

I'm very interested in the carbon sink. I've got to get the numbers from him later about how much forests and trees absorb—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Tell us about your bill.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm going to get to that. The member from St. Catharines just asked me to talk about my bill. I wasn't going to bring it up. I thought that would be self-promotion, but now that he's raised the issue, I'll have to.

I was interested in the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change when he talked about being able to use some of these fees that will be collected to help industry convert their vehicles. In my bill, Bill 76, LNG-powered vehicles, there would be an opportunity—as he said, transportation is an area where greenhouse gases are increasing, and maybe the biggest share on the road is coming out of heavy vehicles.

We already know that a number of municipalities have switched to compressed natural gas for garbage vehicles. I think the next step is either for marine traffic and for rail to get rid of dirty diesel, and also for the truck traffic to go to some form of liquid natural gas. The bill I have, by coincidence, before committee tomorrow for hearings would do a lot of that, so I'm interested in finding out some more about how those—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: The best House leader ever, the member from Simcoe-Grey, got that on the agenda again.

That bill would actually do something where it would have a direct impact on reducing those greenhouse gases. I'm hoping, as we go forward and debate that bill and other debates here in the House, that's something the government might consider. It's a tangible area where we could actually reduce greenhouse gases. It works in Quebec right now in transport, it's working in the United States, and I think we need to bring it to Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I don't think that I've been involved in a more important debate in this House since I was elected. This is transformative stuff. This is incredibly complex. Although the member from Lanark-Frontenac may be entertaining, this is not something to joke about; I'm sorry.

Frankly, generations are relying on us on get it right, and the government has to acknowledge its past indiscretions, its past failures, its past missed opportunities to consult, to work—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: And it's all good, but you have to show a different path here. We have to get it right the first time.

This will not be a panacea. The minister knows that. This is but one tool that jurisdictions need to combat climate change and to save the planet. But it is incredibly complex.

The minister referenced the Financial Accountability Office, an office that we're proud, as New Democrats, to have brought into this place. The officer says that he can't tell whether the government will spend cap-and-trade revenue on new greenhouse gas reduction initiatives. The FAO says that the government might swap the money with existing program funding in order to free up cash for something else. You have to clarify that for us.

It has to be transparent. You're not going to get buy-in from industry, from the public—and you know that public sentiment out there right now is truly not on your side because of your past indiscretions. There certainly is a recognition that we have to do something for climate change, but if your government is at the wheel and they see it veering off, they're not going to buy in.

So take all of our advice. Don't do what you think is right; do what we know can work. There are places around the planet that we can point to that have made advancements on similar-type systems.

Here's one, Minister: There's no requirement that the minister refer to the internationally accepted methodologies for calculating and reporting emissions developed by the IPCC. We've got to at least adhere to the methodologies that are globally recognized.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Addington and Lennox, and not necessarily in that order, for final comments.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to thank the members from Sarnia-Lambton, Nickel Belt, Windsor-Essex and, of course, our esteemed minister for joining into the comments.

Listen, I have a lot of respect for the Minister of the Environment. I'd like to have a little fun as well, but I do have a lot of respect for him. When he does stand in this House—and I know he's honourable and has noble intentions—and comments, I know that some people think that there's this green halo that is over him and this brilliant white aura of purity that comes from the Liberal cabinet. I just don't see it. Maybe my glasses need to be cleaned up a little bit. I don't see that aura quite as members on the Liberal backbench see that green halo that is cast over the minister.

I do find it interesting that it's parliamentary to refer to the bill as hocus-pocus; that's ok. But, of course, we have to be cautious when we talk about the author of the hocus-pocus. The bill, as I stated, is a cap-and-take. It takes from people. It takes and takes and provides little in return. It doesn't recognize those offsets, and I think it needs to if it's going to be a true cap-and-trade, if it's going to be open, if it's going to be transparent, if it's going to be fair—all those things that the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane mentioned about transparency and fairness. This bill is absent of those tenets, those principles that we here in Her Majesty's loyal opposition demand from legislation—that they are fair and they are open, transparent and just for all people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's also my pleasure to speak to this extremely important bill. New Democrats have been waiting for a cap-and-trade discussion, I would say, since I was elected. I had the pleasure to sit beside my colleague from Toronto–Danforth, who talks about green energy, I think, in his dreams. He loves this topic and certainly has been talking to our caucus about this for years and years. So am I happy that we finally have a serious, adult discussion about this bill? Absolutely. I'm really happy that I have a chance to put a few things on the record so that we get it right.

Getting it right is quite simple. It means that we will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It's as simple as this. The entire exercise is focused on one thing: How do we reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

One of the ways to do this is through the introduction of this bill, which will introduce a cap-and-trade system. A cap-and-trade system is already in use in other jurisdictions, and it is part of their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In Ontario, our entire effort will be focused on that. It's a little bit worrisome. That means that it's even more important that we get it right.

How will we know that we have gotten it right? We will know that we have gotten it right because we will be able to measure a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions. We will be able to have a fair, effective and transparent process to look at how much money is being collected, who do we collect this money from and where we are investing it. This is where the fair, the transparent and the effective all come into play.

When we talk about effective, at the end of the day, we have seen other provinces. We don't have to look very far. Let's just look to Quebec right next to us and see how they did. Quebec introduced their own cap-andtrade, which is often mentioned by the Liberal government as an inspiration for what we're doing now. But if you look at what really happened, in 2006, 10 years ago, the Quebec government went on with their action plan. They spent close to \$1.6 billion to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and they had given themselves a target. Unfortunately, although the money was collected and the money was spent, they only reached 10% of the original goal that they had given themselves. They had given themselves a specific goal for transportation of merchandise. In that, they reached 8% of their goal. They had given themselves a specific goal for agriculture and food production, forestry, and municipalities, and in those, they reached 1% of the goal that they had given themselves.

So it's not because you gathered money from cap-and-trade and it's not because you invest that money that you are necessarily effective. We will know we are effective when the greenhouse gas emissions go down. This exercise of collecting money from people who produce greenhouse gases and investing into projects that are supposed to reduce them—unless you actually are successful at the end, the entire exercise will be for nothing.

I don't want to miss the boat on this. This is too importance for us to miss the boat on this.

L'Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique, which is an organization that really looked at what Quebec had done, consider this a fiasco. Quebec failed. They did collect money, like we will, on natural gas, on gas at the pump; they did all of this. Did they invest in projects? Yes, they did. But what really happened was that the money was invested more for political gain than for the end goal. And the end goal, you have to remember, is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So it has to be effective.

It then has to be fair. I represent one of those big ridings in northeastern Ontario. I have no big municipalities in my riding. I have no mayors. I have no towns. I have none of this. I have 33 little communities, not one of them big enough to have a council. If you think about, "Oh, let's switch to public transit," who are we kidding? There is no public transit in most of the land mass of Nickel Belt. If you live close to the city of Sudbury, yes,

some of them can connect to the city of Sudbury public transit. But everybody else—I live in Whitefish; there is no public transit in Whitefish. Beaver Lake, Lake Panache—you ask all the way around: It is just not an option. Will I be paying more for gas? Absolutely. Will I have the option to do something about it? No, Speaker. I'll still have to come here to work, and everybody else who lives in my riding will still have to come to work. When I'm in Toronto, I always use public transit. I love it. It works well. Sometimes it's a little bit busy and doesn't always run as smoothly as I had planned, but it doesn't matter; I use it. I have alternatives. When I'm back home, I do not.

I do know that in northern Ontario, it is a lot colder. I go out of my House and there is four feet of snow. This is where we haven't shovelled. Everywhere else, the snowbanks are 12 feet tall. I get down here, and if there's four inches of snow, it's because there used to be a snowbank there. It is a lot colder. What does that mean? That means that we need to heat our houses. That means that for people on low income, it will mean spending a larger proportion of those low incomes basically on paying for the cap-and-trade.

Why didn't this government do the same thing that BC has done, and that Alberta is about to do, and put in that a part of the money that is collected should be given back to the people in northern and rural communities, where they haven't got a choice, and who are of low income? Why don't we put aside a little bit of those revenues to make sure that people who don't have a choice to take public transit, who live in northern Ontario, where we will spend more on heating because I have four feet of snow in my front yard and you guys have none—why don't we take that into account? That would bring fairness into the equation.

1740

The last part is transparency. This is something that has to happen. My colleague from Essex quoted some of this. Basically, if you have no independent access to these funds, it doesn't matter if you do the best job possible; there will be people who will doubt. If you don't have the facts and figures in front of everybody so they can see where the money went, some people will doubt it.

We cannot afford to fail on this program, Speaker. Too much is on the line. We have to be successful. We have to have a cap-and-trade system that will bring down the greenhouse gases. It has to succeed. In order for this to succeed, it has to be transparent. We have to see the money coming in, we have to see the money going out and we have to be able to measure that we actually decreased the amount of greenhouse gases.

In other jurisdictions, and I will refer to Quebec again, Clean Energy Canada summarized their findings by saying that they question the transparency of the green fund expenditures, noting that this money often serves "highly political objectives." I don't want a report in Ontario that says the same thing. I want to prevent this. How do we prevent this? We use the officers of this Legislature to give us transparency into what happened.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm just going to be very short, Mr. Speaker. Let's just take what we're doing and the importance of a cap-and-trade system because of the \$1.9 billion in proceeds. You're going to need that money, particularly in rural and northern Ontario, because that program is going to go into that person's house to help them with their heating and cooling system to make it net zero. It's going to be, as technologies emerge—and there's a limited number of them right now—to get them hybrid and electric vehicles to reduce their emissions so that they're paying less at the pump, so that they're not using fossil fuels. That's the whole point of this program, and it's our ability to deploy that. That's why we need the proceeds; that's why we support a cap-and-trade system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to join in the debate, and I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt for her comments. As someone who represents a rural riding, I agree with her that residents in ridings like mine that don't have a transit system, where there's no way to get from Westport to Cardinal or from Kemptville to Gananoque—there's just not that infrastructure to get them there.

But it was very interesting: A while ago, Kevin O'Leary wrote the Premier an open letter. I was fascinated by the letter, so I actually filed an order paper question, order paper question 625, and I'll read it into the record. It says:

"Enquiry of the ministry: Will the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change commit to providing, on a quarterly basis, the following information regarding the cap-and-trade system: statements of revenue into and expenditures out of the cap-and-trade fund; details on the number of government employees hired to administer the program; audited information on the current valuation of the government's investments in the green tech sector; and data showing progress made on reducing ... emissions."

I filed that on March 2. I hope that part of the debate—and I'm glad that the minister is here. Maybe he would respond to some of that open letter that Mr. O'Leary, a citizen who's getting quite a lot of publicity lately—that maybe he would respond to that. He's smiling at me, so I think maybe he's interested in providing the answer.

I just want to say again that I think that my leader, Patrick Brown, has stated very clearly that this can't be a cash grab. There has got to be revenue neutrality to what the government—this can't just be a slush fund to spend on their scandal, waste and mismanagement over the last 13 years.

Mr. Grant Crack: Aw, Steve.

Mr. Steve Clark: They can heckle me all they want, but I think that's what Ontarians want. They want to make sure this isn't a slush fund for more—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Mr. Steve Clark: —scandal and mismanagement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before I continue, I'd just like to remind all members in the Legislature that the use of an electronic device is not permitted within the Legislature itself—not to suggest that it has been used, but it could have been used, and I'm just sending out that reminder to all.

Mr. Steve Clark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I apologize that I read from an electronic device a document that is easily available both in electronic and written form

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That was a point of order. You are allowed to correct your record.

Now back to questions and comments. The member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My colleague from Nickel Belt highlighted a lot of concerns that she's already hearing from her communities and her constituents. It's been reiterated by our colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane. I think members in the chamber will have a whole variety of questions that they are going to need to answer for their communities. It gives me this terrible feeling that at some point this government might bring in time allocation on this bill. I hope you don't do that, for a whole host of reasons.

Number one is that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered.

Number two is, I'm looking forward to hearing what they are going to say over there. The more time you give them, the more we may be able to parse out some form of rational thought around what the official opposition thinks around the issue of climate change and what they would do. I'm looking forward to that as well. But I think it adds to the debate.

Here are a couple of questions for the minister, and I'm pleased to see him, as always, in the House.

The minister may appoint a public servant—or other persons, i.e. not public servants—as a director to administer and to enforce the act. The minister may delegate their authority to a public servant or other persons, and the director may delegate their authority to a public servant or other person, meaning that person is going to be at arm's length or outside of the parameters of oversight of this House. That's concerning to me. We certainly don't want to outsource such an enormous responsibility in term of ensuring that we're meeting targets. So please answer that question for me.

There's another one: The bill doesn't refer to any need for data or economic outlook analysis to be considered when developing the action plan. How are you going to know or how do we know right now, which you should have—you should be launching those experts to tell us what that economic impact is going to be on the whole host of industries in the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I want to start by thanking the Minister of

the Environment for his leadership on this file, because there's no question that this is a complicated file. I'm listening to the opposition on both sides, and there are questions, obviously, that I think affirm the fact that it is an actual complicated file.

I have two girls, and I was telling the Minister of the Environment that we were out a few weeks ago, two Sundays ago, and it was so warm that my daughter just had a T-shirt on. I said, "You've got to put on a coat." She says, "I'm sweating here." Then the next day, we're in a blizzard. I keep sending pictures to the Minister of the Environment. I sent him a picture of strawberries that were growing in December and my garlic that was sprouting in early December, which was just astonishing.

I understand that the job of the NDP and the job of the Conservatives is to criticize and hold us accountable, but we need to work together on this file. It's the only way we're going to get it right.

we're going to get it right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Nickel Belt for final comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the member from Essex, the member from Leeds—Grenville and the two ministers for their comments.

The comments from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change: I too believe that things will change for the better, that new technology will roll out that will lead us towards way less dependence on a carbon-burning-type of a culture and environment, but we are not there yet. The people in my riding will start to pay 4.7 cents more on gas on January 1. In nine short months, they will start to pay. But it will be a long time before the people of Nickel Belt have the \$150,000 they need to buy an electric car—not that there would be anywhere to plug it in in Nickel Belt, if you had \$150,000 to spend on such a thing. I would be really happy to get the \$6,000 rebate, but, really, it feels like this is not for us.

Remember that there are people in northern Ontario. We care about the environment. I come from Sudbury. We had an environmental disaster before people cared about the environment. Do you remember the black rocks? Do you remember that we cut down all the trees so that we can smelt our metal into the open air? It pretty much killed everything living, including humans. Then we learned and we planted trees, we regreened and we did all of this and we will continue to do this because we care about our environment. But you have to help us in the transition because the burden of cost on the people in northern Ontario—especially low-income people—will be hard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have about 10 minutes, and it'll be hard to do all this in 10 minutes.

I just want to say a few things very quickly to the members from Essex, Windsor-Tecumseh and my friend from Nickel Belt. What keeps me up at night is that we have 30 years, if you look at the work that came out of the IPCC last week that says we're already at the

guardrail: It's not even 1.5 degrees really; we have less than one degree left. That's no flexibility.

If you look at the momentum of the carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere, we're now dealing with impacts from before I was born. We have momentum for 50 or 60 years of impacts. Ontario in the south will already be four degrees warmer; in the north, in your communities, it'll be eight degrees Celsius warmer. We're not sure we can even survive that.

I don't think the enormity of this challenge has been fully internalized yet by this Legislature. But I want to thank you because I think you're speaking to all of us in the terms of the reality and the soberness we need.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with some of the issues—I've talked before about this—about why a cap-and-trade system and what our disagreement is with the opposition. A carbon-pricing system, as the Leader of the Opposition would suggest, that does not have a cap and does not have the market mechanisms—the member for Simcoe—Grey is here. The \$160 a tonne is Mark Jaccard's number. It was a study done from a policy journal that said that to get to 14% below 1990 levels, which is the federal target, that would be the price per tonne, and it would have to jump over a period of time by \$10 a year.

Our target in Ontario—we're already at about 7%—is 37%. We chose a cap-and-trade system because we all need to understand the differences here. We're debating two visions. The Tory vision and the Liberal vision are very different, and I think that probably the New Demo-

cratic vision and ours are much more aligned.

A capped decline rate guarantees your reductions. We will, if we pass this bill, meet our 2020 targets, a 4.17% decline rate. We're not relying on price. That's why, at a market level in a bigger market with California and Quebec, which is the fifth-largest economy in the world, that large stable market and capped decline rate keep the price down, right? So the price at the pump will be much lower than if you had to do it with the BC model that some people talk about, a revenue-neutral tax. Our emissions have been going down in Ontario because we had another, what's called, implicit fee, which was the coal plant closures. You can't do them again. There aren't any more coal plants to close. It's now about cars and it's now about houses because our industry is coming down.

Why allowances? Why that kind of system? Well, if you work at Essar Steel or you're working at Vale Inco or you're working in Samia at any one of the fuel centres, there is a limited amount of technology that's available. Again, if we did what the Leader of the Opposition suggested and that kind of model, we'd end up with what happened in BC where the cement plants left and those people lost their jobs. BC now imports its cement, with a huge carbon footprint, from China.

The British government does something called dematerialization of their economy. I hope the member from Simcoe-Grey is listening, because I don't understand how a Conservative in Canada would disagree with a Conservative in the UK. Under their system, they actually dematerialized their economy. They lost all 17 steel mills. We are not prepared to lose industry over this.

While every industry in some way is paying, and a small minority of the heavy emitters get transitional allowances, that's to protect the jobs. We're not just doing this for big business. Who's out advocating for this? Not just the industry associations but Unifor and the people who represent the workers in that plant. Does that mean that they're going to be reduced? Absolutely, but Michigan and Illinois are not in a carbon pricing system yet. We cannot disadvantage our workers and our economy around that. At the same time, we have to achieve our reductions. We think the cap-and-trade system does it.

Again, where I think we would probably agree with the NDP and disagree with the Conservatives is I think there's nothing more insane than a revenue-neutral carbon pricing system. Why? The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke attacked the government this morning. He said, "If you don't extend these programs to subsidize retrofits, you're abandoning rural Ontario," and he threw his papers down on the desk with great drama, as he often does. Where does he think the money is coming from for the existing retrofit programs for natural gas and oil and propane? The exact point of the member from Nickel Belt: We can't expect my Aunt Anne in Wanup, who is 96 years old on a fixed income, to change out her fossil fuel heating system. She's a constituent. My Aunt Anne is going to need several thousand dollars in a grant program for the same reason we heard the drama from the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. Why? Because we have to take the money from the polluters—which is why it's a regulatory feeand give it to those constituents, working- and middleclass families, who can't do it.

Why do we have \$14,000 subsidies on electric vehicles? Because if you're buying the crossover and if you have to drive one of those big Fords or one of those big Tahoes, there is now technology that is comparative. Within a year or two, we will see major new technologies, hopefully being made in Windsor, if we're lucky, because we're pushing very hard and we have an advantage now with this. You need a \$14,000 subsidy if you live in northern Ontario for that big truck, so you need the \$1.9 billion.

I am totally confused by the Leader of the Opposition, whose critic on Thursday attacked the government and said, "Do not have any kind of carbon tax; do not put a price on carbon." I have her entire speech here. Her lead-off speech was, "Don't support this bill. Don't support a price on carbon."

I can tell you that the only thing that's changed since last week was the polls. They figured out what the New Democrats and the Liberals know, which is that you can't form a government in Ontario unless you're on the right side of the carbon pricing issue. That's the only thing that's changed.

How do you attack Stéphane Dion? How do you run in elections after elections? Do you know the speeches I've gotten from the member from Nipissing, from Huron–Bruce and the way through the caucus? They weren't

even neutral. I have pamphlets that were put out after I got elected in 2005 because I wrote columns for years in the Toronto Star saying that a carbon price was essential. The Tory's election literature against me was recirculating my columns from the Star in my constituency. This is how rabidly anti-carbon pricing you were.

If we're a little askance or concerned—I don't know whether you're going to come out for the nationalization of banks next. That would be a bigger flip-flop for you guys. But how you—

. Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have four carbon trading systems.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Who did the first carbon trading with Hydro One 16 years ago?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You guys did. You did, my friend. So why aren't you supporting it?

Mr. Jim Wilson: It wasn't mature enough and it was full of scandal back then.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, if I could have the floor. Thank you.

The \$1.9 billion: Where does that money go? I want my friend from Lanark to be very clear about this so that I can answer your colleague's question. All of this has to go, by law and by demand, into GHG reductions. We are actually holding ourselves to a higher standard. We have a specific line. We not only have to report where it goes; we have to demonstrate the GHG reductions.

Mr. Speaker, \$1.9 billion may sound like a lot of money, but go up on top of the CN Tower. You can't see a lot of Ontario there, but you can see enough buildings, and if you do the math on how many people you can see and how many of those old houses in Riverdale and in the Annex need to be retrofitted, \$1.9 billion is barely going to cut it.

We can't raise taxes. We cannot use this money to subsidize it, but we do have to absorb all of the other costs of climate change from our other sources of revenue. When we lost eight metres of GO track, it cost us \$600 million. When Burlington's stormwater system, because of new precipitation levels—a lot more rain, a shorter amount of rain but greater volume, destroyed their sewer system, three times destroyed our operating rooms. Where is the money coming from for that, Mr. Speaker? It's coming from existing revenues. It doesn't appear in our budget debates. You don't see the insurance industry, which has been losing money—you have to actually account for that.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Hurricane Hazel happens every 100 years. It's a 100-year storm.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Now a 100-year storm event is a 10-year event; a 10-year event is an annual event. The costs of that are being absorbed by municipalities, hospitals and municipal governments.

Anyone who says it's revenue-neutral—they're saying revenue-neutral to government. We're making it revenue-positive to our constituents, for the same people in Nickel Belt who have to replace that. If it's revenue-neutral to government, then there's no money for them. They can't replace it.

We need it to be revenue-positive for Ontarians, which is why the polluter-pays principle is so important. Those large polluters will pay. The ones that are trade-exposed and carbon-intensive, as our friends Jerry Dias and others have pointed out, need that transition. Are they getting a free ride? No. The vast majority—almost all of them—are paying, except for a very few, and it's transitional. Are we working with unions and industries to get the plans in place so they can get the technology in place to stay competitive and lower their emissions? But revenue-neutral? Not revenue-neutral for our constituents. It would be a pain in the neck for them if the Tories got their way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There is not time for questions and comments. That will be at a later point in time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): As it is now 6 o'clock or a few moments after, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1803.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud– Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London-Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand -Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	-
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	, A.A.
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest- Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism
		Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	1
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity-Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
,		

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor-Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and	
	Addington Barrie	
Hoggarth, And (LIB)		Looden Decemined Destrict Chaffel most income
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough-Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East /	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à
, ,	Pickering-Scarborough-Est	l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la
		Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
,		

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	·
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Naturbak Toros (NIDD)	Essex	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	Source So
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches-East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre
		Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor

Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo Han Dong, Michael Harris Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith

Monique Taylor

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn

Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson

Mike Colle, Grant Crack Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon

Lisa M. Thompson

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins

Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon John Fraser, Wayne Gates Marie-France Lalonde, Har

Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri

Laurie Scott

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren

Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon

Chris Ballard, Steve Clark Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha

Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod

Han Dong, John Fraser

Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi Julia Munro, Arthur Potts

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Ouioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French

Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat

Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker

Jeff Yurek

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh

Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns

Glenn Thibeault

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch





	DEPOT DES PROJETS DE LOI
Visitors	In athonic Law (Employee Leave of Absonce When
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	Jonathan's Law (Employee Leave of Absence When
Mrs. Gila Martow7931	Child Dies), 2016, Bill 175, Mr. Tabuns / Loi Jonathan de 2016 sur le congé des employés en cas
	de décès d'un enfant, projet de loi 175, M. Tabuns
DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS	First reading agreed to
Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act	Mr. Peter Tabuns
(Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual	Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day Act, 2016,
Violence and Harassment), 2016, Bill 132,	Bill 176, Mr. Anderson / Loi de 2016 sur la Journée
Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2016 sur le Plan d'action	de sensibilisation à la santé mentale maternelle,
contre la violence et le harcèlement sexuels (en	projet de loi 176, M. Anderson
soutien aux survivants et en opposition à la	First reading agreed to7935
violence et au harcèlement sexuels), projet de loi	Mr. Granville Anderson7935
132, Mme MacCharles	Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave,
Third reading agreed to7932	Accommodation and Training Act, 2016, Bill 177,
Correction of record	Ms. Sattler / Loi de 2016 sur le congé et les mesures
Hon. Liz Sandals7932	d'accommodement pour les employés victimes de
	violence familiale ou sexuelle et la formation dans
INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /	le lieu de travail, projet de loi 177, Mme Sattler
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS	First reading agreed to7935
Mr. Peter Tabuns7932	Ms. Peggy Sattler7935
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	
Tion. Reviii Daniel Hynn	STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
MEMBERCI CTATEMENTS /	AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS	MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES
Kraft Hockeyville 2016	
Mr. Steve Clark	International Women's Day / Journée internationale
Southwestern Ontario	de la femme
Mr. Taras Natyshak7932	Hon. Tracy MacCharles
Refugees	Ms. Laurie Scott
Ms. Daiene Vernile	Ms. Andrea Horwath7937
Wind turbines	
Mr. Todd Smith	PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS
Bereavement leave	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	Health care funding
Community awards	Mr. Jim McDonell7938
Mr. Chris Ballard	Ontario Drug Benefit Program
Huron county economic development	Mr. Wayne Gates7938
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	Lung health
_	Mr. Chris Ballard7938
Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail	Special-needs students
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	Mr. Steve Clark7939
Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario	Alzheimer's disease
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn7934	Mr. Percy Hatfield7939
DEDODES DI COMMENTANTO	Lung health
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /	Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn7939
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS	Environmental protection
Standing Committee on Government Agencies	Mr. Ernie Hardeman7939
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)7935	Ontario Northland Transportation Commission
Report deemed adopted7935	Mme France Gélinas7940

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /

Child custody	Ms. Sophie Kiwala	794
Mr. Jim McDonell7940	Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	7948
Hospital funding	Mr. Chris Ballard	7949
Mr. Jim Wilson7940	Mr. Grant Crack	7949
Hospital funding	Mr. Ernie Hardeman	7950
Mr. Wayne Gates7940	Mr. Percy Hatfield	7950
Health care funding	Hon. Jeff Leal	795
Mr. Robert Bailey7941	Mr. Randy Hillier	795
	Mr. Chris Ballard	795
ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR	Mr. Randy Hillier	795
Time allocation	Mme France Gélinas	7953
Mr. Steve Clark	Hon, Glen R. Murray	7953
Mr. John Vanthof	Mr. Robert Bailey	7953
Vote deferred	Mr. Taras Natyshak	7954
Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon	Mr. Randy Hillier	7954
Economy Act, 2016, Bill 172, Mr. Murray / Loi de	Mme France Gélinas	7954
2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et	Hon. Glen R. Murray	7956
une économie sobre en carbone, projet de loi 172,	Mr. Steve Clark	7956
M. Murray	Mr. Taras Natyshak	7956
Mr. John Vanthof7944	Hon. Michael Coteau	7956
Hon. James J. Bradley7946	Mme France Gélinas	7957
Mr. Robert Bailey7946	Hon. Glen R. Murray	7957
Mr. Taras Natyshak7946	Second reading debate deemed adjourned	7959
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn7947	Royal assent / Sanction royale	
Mr. John Vanthof7947	The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls)	7959

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 8 March 2016 / Mardi 8 mars 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JO	UR	Health care funding	
		Mr. Patrick Brown	792
Time allocation		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	
Hon. Yasir Naqvi		Hon. Eric Hoskins	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	7908	Child care	
Mr. Gilles Bisson	7911	Ms. Andrea Horwath	792
Ms. Laurie Scott	7913	Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	7915	Hon. Liz Sandals	
Debate deemed adjourned	7917	Child care	
		Ms. Andrea Horwath	792
		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	
INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /		Hon. Liz Sandals	
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS		Privatization of public assets	
Mr. Steve Clark	7017	Mr. Victor Fedeli	792
Mr. John Vanthof		Hon. Charles Sousa	
Hon. Tracy MacCharles		Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
Mr. Robert Bailey		Ms. Catherine Fife	792
Mr. Paul Miller.		Hon. Eric Hoskins	
Hon. Reza Moridi		Sexual violence and harassment	
Ms. Sylvia Jones		Ms. Ann Hoggarth	792
Mr. Percy Hatfield		Hon. Tracy MacCharles	
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Special-needs students	
Hon. Deborah Matthews		Mr. Todd Smith	792
Ms. Cindy Forster		Hon. Liz Sandals	
Hon. Jeff Leal		Domestic violence	
Hon. Steven Del Duca		Ms. Peggy Sattler	792
Hon. Reza Moridi		Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	
Mrs. Cristina Martins		International trade	
Ms. Daiene Vernile		Mr. Bob Delaney	792
Mme France Gélinas		Hon. Michael Chan	
Mr. Ted Arnott		Discrimination	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)		Ms. Laurie Scott	792
George Ashe	/ > 10	Hon. Reza Moridi	
Ms. Jennifer K. French	7918	Pay equity	
Hon. James J. Bradley		Ms. Cindy Forster	792
Mr. Lorne Coe		Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)		Employment standards	
, op o (Ms. Soo Wong	793
		Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	
ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORAI	LES	Energy conservation	
		Mr. John Yakabuski	793
Climate change		Hon. Bob Chiarelli	
Mr. Patrick Brown	7921		
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7921		

Continued on inside back cover

Hon. Glen R. Murray7921



ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 9 March 2016

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 9 mars 2016



Président L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière Deborah Deller

Speaker Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building 111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430 Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario





Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement 111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430 Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2016 ONTARIO BUDGET BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2016

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2016, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my honour to rise on behalf of Ontario's New Democratic caucus to speak to the Liberal budget motion. I'll be splitting my lead this morning with the finance critic for our caucus, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Heading into this budget, like many Ontarians, I was hopeful; hopeful that the Premier was truly listening to the people of this province. Not just talking about listening and consulting, but really listening to the people of Ontario, because over the last couple of years, most Ontarians have seen a Premier and a government that look out of step and out of touch with the real struggles, the real challenges, the real hopes of families across this province.

Increasingly, people are telling me about their disappointment in this Premier; increasingly, people are asking what happened to the change that she promised; and, increasingly, people are questioning this Premier's priorities. They see a Premier who at every turn, Speaker, seems more and more preoccupied with the well-being and success of the Liberal Party than she is with the well-being and success of Ontario families, children and seniors.

For anyone who doesn't yet believe that this Premier is out of touch and not listening, you need only to look at the Premier's decision to ignore more than 80% of Ontarians, listen to a small group of Liberal cabinet ministers and private investors and start selling off Hydro One. The Liberals chose to put private profits ahead of the priorities of people, and Ontarians are seeing that.

I was hopeful that this budget would mark a big shift and focus on the basics that a government just can't afford to get wrong: the basics like good jobs, jobs for young people who, frankly, deserve a much better start in life than an unpaid internship, and for countless moms and dads who are working hard but still stuck in lowpaying, part-time jobs with no benefits and no security; jobs that leave their families on the edge of poverty.

I have to tell you, the Liberals have a new word for this—no word of a lie, Speaker. In the House last Thursday, the associate finance minister referred to low-paying, insecure, precarious jobs as "contemporary mobile employment." That's the new Liberal word for precarious work. Only the Liberals can make getting hosed sound like it's modern and exciting.

A government should get the basics right, like good schools, to ensure that every classroom has the right supports for students. That's something parents should be able to trust their governments to do. It is one of the basics, Speaker, basics like strengthening our public health care so that it's there for our loved ones when they need it.

I was optimistic that the Premier would take a hard look around Ontario today and realize that it's time for her government to focus on what matters to most people, because we have so many strengths in this province. We have so much potential to build the future that we want to share, and yet that's not where this government is taking us.

The truth is that for most people, life is getting tougher and life is getting harder. Families are struggling. Seniors are still waiting hundreds of days for the home care that they need and years and years on end for the long-term care that they need. It actually breaks your heart to see what's happening to seniors under the Liberals' watch here in the province of Ontario. Students who need extra support are seeing less of it in the classroom instead of more.

Les gens du Nord ne peuvent toujours pas compter sur ce gouvernement pour assurer la sécurité des routes dans la saison hivernale. In fact, the failure of the brand new Nipigon bridge shows that northern infrastructure problems are getting worse here in Ontario, not better. When you talk to northerners, Speaker, they're ready to bolt. They want to get out of Ontario, because this Liberal government is treating the north so badly.

All of us can see in our own communities, in our own backyards, that the real needs of people just are not being met. Child poverty is growing again here in the city of Toronto. That's not what was supposed to happen, Speaker, but the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen here in Liberal Ontario.

The wait-list for affordable housing in Windsor just reached a record high a couple of weeks ago, and First Nations communities were forced to declare a state of emergency in February because the health needs of indigenous peoples are still not being met by the provincial and federal governments. Shameful does not begin to describe it, Speaker. Just calling it wrong does not even begin to actually make things right, but the truth is that growing inequality continues to shape the lives of far too many people in this province.

I hoped that the Premier would actually see that and use this budget as the perfect opportunity to start to fix it, because we find ourselves at a point in this province where we face some critical questions. Are we really going to give up on trying to make life a little easier for people? Are we really going to accept that the government and the Premier should only work for some people and not for all Ontarians? And are we really going to stand by and watch as inequality grows, the gaps get wider and more and more people fall through the cracks?

Are we going to let that happen in Ontario, or will we put the government to work to tackle inequality and inequity? Will we focus on lifting people up, not cutting down the supports that communities need? And will we refuse to let two Ontarios grow further and further apart? That's the choice in front of all Ontarians. It's stark, it's real, and it's being played out in the lives of millions of people on a daily basis.

When you read through the budget, you can't help but see what's missing from this Liberal document. There is no plan in this budget to repair the damage in our health care system. For the seventh straight year, hospital funding will not keep up with the rate of inflation. And front-line nurses—kind of like the nurses I sat and talked with in London this past week—know that hospitals will be forced to make even deeper cuts to patient care.

0910

When it comes to post-secondary education, the Liberals did announce that they are reforming the way student assistance is delivered to students. That's a good thing. New Democrats know that students have been calling for changes like this for years. We all know that having the highest tuition fees in the entire country has stood in the way of too many Ontario students. Expanding access to university and college is, of course, something that New Democrats support, but we still have questions about how this is going to roll out.

When it comes to post-secondary education, there is no new money in this budget dedicated to making university or college education more accessible or more affordable, and no confirmation of a tuition cap when the new program comes into play. These are concerning facts. There's still an expectation that the lowest-income families will be able to contribute, or will be required to contribute, large amounts of money for their kids' post-secondary education. I don't think the government is being all that up front about that reality. And there's no plan to help graduates who can't get a handle on their student debt and still can't find a good job upon graduation. Ontario students deserve better. They deserve better access to university and college, they deserve not to graduate with mortgage-sized debts, but most im-

portantly, we have to remember that education doesn't magically start at the first year of university; it starts in our public schools, from day one.

In fact, it starts with affordable, licensed, public child care, the kind of child care that too many families can't find and certainly can't afford in Liberal Ontario. In this budget, there's no help for parents who need child care zero-no help for parents who need child care and no plan to reverse the cuts to schools that last year alone saw \$430 million taken out of our classrooms, notwithstanding the fact that more and more students are sounding alarm bells about the fact that they cannot get the supports and help they need to succeed at school. Yet this government pulled \$430 million out of the school system instead of using those funds to help those kids who are struggling, to make sure they have an opportunity to reach their full potential here in the province of Ontario. The Liberals like to talk a good game about these concepts, about these values, but when it comes to investing in the kinds of programs that help kids actually reach their full potential, the Liberals are AWOL and the budget was AWOL.

In fact, what we do see in this budget are plans that take us in the complete wrong direction and leave too many people worse off. The government actually admits in their budget that they will fall 60,000 jobs short of their job creation target—60,000 jobs short in a budget that's called Jobs for Today and Tomorrow. They call their budget Jobs for Today and Tomorrow, and yet, one of the first things they do is acknowledge that they're not going to reach the jobs target they set for themselves in last year's budget. And guess what? Last year, they actually downgraded their jobs projection by 65,000 jobs.

So year after year, this government talks a great game about job creation while we see more and more people in precarious work, while we see more and more students working in the hospitality industry instead of in the fields they studied for, while we see good manufacturing jobs leave this province and while we see entire communities in the highest figures when it comes to unemployment rates in this province—in fact, in this country—over and over again. Yet in the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow budget, the Liberals are pulling back their estimate of how many jobs they'll be able to support or create in 2016-17. It does not bode well for those struggling families; it does not bode well for those young people who are trying to get a start in life.

Speaker, it's a failure of a budget. The next thing you know, the Liberals will pull the same trick they pulled with poverty and homelessness. They're just going to stop setting job targets altogether, just like they stopped setting targets for homelessness and poverty reduction. That's exactly what the Liberals have done, because they never meet their targets. They talk a great game and they put these targets out there, and then year after year after year goes by, and, instead of reducing child poverty, they're actually allowing child poverty to grow here in the city of Toronto. Regardless of all of their rhetoric, of all of their lovely promises, of all of their beautiful

headlines, kids are still going to school hungry; families are still not able to put a decent roof over the heads of their children and their family. That is what's happening in Liberal Ontario after a dozen years with this government in office. It is shameful.

So what do they do? They stop setting actual targets. They stop setting actual targets, and they don't increase the kinds of revenues that are supposed to be utilized to reduce some of the poverty in this province. In fact, they say, "Oh, well, we kept it the same," but of course we know that inflation erodes the value of that investment, and yet they talk a good game about how much they're investing while we watch child poverty grow here in the city of Toronto. It is shameful, Speaker. Anyway, that's what we can expect. Probably next year, there won't be any jobs targets at all in the Liberal budget. That's a prediction I'm making right here and now, Speaker. We'll see if it comes true or not.

On climate change, do you know what? We are still waiting for meaningful action on climate change. New Democrats have been calling for meaningful action on climate change for years, Speaker. But for cap-and-trade to actually work for all Ontarians, it needs to follow three basic principles, and this is what New Democrats are concerned about: It needs to be fair, it needs to be transparent and it needs to be effective. I think those are three fundamentals that most people would agree need to be a part of a climate change plan for this province.

It needs to be fair so that struggling families and northerners don't have to foot the whole bill while the biggest polluters and emitters get a free pass. I can tell you that low-income families, moderate-income families and northerners are feeling the hits from this government like you wouldn't believe. I'm heading up to northwestern Ontario pretty soon, Speaker. I can tell you that I'm expecting to hear an earful from those folks who feel that this Liberal government has abandoned them year after year after year. And now we have a climate change plan that the government has put forward that does not even acknowledge—does not even acknowledge—the severity of the winter climate in the north, the length of the winter season in northern Ontario. It doesn't even acknowledge that those Ontarians—yes, believe it or not, they're part of our province, at least for now, right? And yet this government refuses to acknowledge, doesn't even bother to build in some kind of fairness for those folks. And it's the same for low-income families and moderate-income families.

The bottom line is: People cannot afford the increases in the daily cost of living that this government has caused families. People are telling me that they can't pay their hydro bills now. They're making choices around heat and putting food on the table because of what this government has done with our electricity system and the mess that it has made with privatization in that sector. They don't know what to do next. And now, instead of actually building into this climate change plan some fairness around those struggling families, the Liberals are in la-la land, as usual. They have no concept. They are out of

touch. They are clueless when it comes to what's happening to real families in this province. Speaker, this budget shows that in spades.

So it has to be fair. That's what New Democrats say about a climate change plan: It has to be fair. It has to be transparent as well, to make certain that every single dollar that's collected in this cap-and-trade plan is used to reduce emissions and doesn't become the next slush fund for the Liberals.

I have to tell you that after being in this House six months after the Liberals first came to office back in 2003—I was elected in 2004—we have seen boondoggle after boondoggle, scandal after scandal, and waste after waste after waste of good, hard-earned public dollars because these Liberals just cannot seem to get it right no matter what they do.

0920

In fact, I was talking to somebody just yesterday who said that they think that the Liberals are like the reverse Midas: Everything they touch certainly doesn't turn to gold. I'm not going to tell you what they said it turns to, Speaker, because that would not be parliamentary language.

But the bottom line is, it is absolutely the case that we are really, really worried that this is going to be yet another Liberal slush fund that's going to be used for all kinds of other goals but not for what it was meant to do, which was to actually invest in greenhouse-gas-emission-reducing types of projects and initiatives. We're quite concerned about that because we know the track record of this government. We know the track record of the Liberals.

Most importantly, it does need to be an effective system. It actually needs to work. It can't simply be more talk of targets—I think I already talked about targets earlier in my speech, Speaker. The last thing we need is the Liberal history of targets and reaching them and not reaching them being played over again with our cap-and-trade program. As we know, the Liberals put out targets like candy in a candy store but they never actually reach their targets; and then, the next thing you know, those targets just kind of slip away like they never existed in the first place, and we don't have any achievement. We don't have any forward movement on some of the most important issues in our province, some of the most important things that are facing families.

If they do the same thing with the climate change plan, if they do the same thing with the cap-and-trade plan and set targets that are just there as baubles in the window for people to look at, but they are not actually committed to reaching those targets and reducing our carbon footprint here in the province of Ontario, then shame on them. New Democrats will not support a cap-and-trade plan that does not seriously—seriously—tackle climate change here in the province of Ontario. Those are the things we need to see. We need to see transparency, we need to see fairness and we need to see effectiveness in this cap-and-trade plan, and thus far, we are not confident—we are not confident—that the Liberals have met those measures.

Dans la lutte contre le changement climatique, nous avons besoin d'un plan d'action qui soit juste, transparent et efficace.

But that's not what's in this budget. The budget was another missed opportunity to do the right thing, Speaker. On top of all of that, on top of ignoring the basics and missing real opportunities, buried deep in this budget we see that the Liberals will force most Ontario seniors to pay nearly twice as much for their prescription drugs, starting this summer—seniors who are already struggling to keep on the heat, struggling to keep the lights on, struggling to put food on the table. The Premier calls them affluent seniors. Seniors earning \$19,500 a yearshe calls them affluent. Talk about an out-of-touch Premier. Talk about an out-of-touch government. If ever there was evidence that the Premier and the Liberal government are out of touch with reality, with the reality that faces most people in this province, then this budget is it and their wrong-headed decision on prescription drugs is it.

Ever since I read that in the budget I've been thinking a lot about what it means for Grace. Grace is a senior whom I met at one of our community meetings on the Liberal sell-off of Hydro One. Grace lives in a co-op housing complex here in Toronto. I think she told me that she lives on a fixed income of about \$25,000 a year; she isn't rich by any means and she certainly would not categorize herself as affluent. When we met, she was worried. She was worried about her hydro bill. She came to a meeting about the Liberal sell-off of Hydro One. But now the Liberals want to add to Grace's worries and force seniors like her to grapple with higher drug costs, too. If she's anything like the average senior, Grace is going to need at least eight different medications this year. She's going to have to fill some of those prescriptions every couple of weeks. And now, starting this summer, the cost of her annual deductible is going to jump by 70% and she's going to pay more each and every time that she fills one of those prescriptions.

I've always believed that the most important thing that a leader can do, or someone who calls themselves a leader can do, is to put herself in somebody else's shoes. That's what I try to do, Speaker. I know that is what New Democrats try to do. I try to think of what higher drug costs will really mean to the lives of Ontario seniors, and I know it means that seniors are going to miss meals to pinch pennies. They're going to turn off the heat when they need it most, and they will skip the very medications that keep them healthy and out of hospital.

Worst of all, forcing most seniors to pay more for drugs undermines the principle at the very heart of public health care. That's what I find so stunning, so shameful about this Liberal government who talked a good game, who had their Minister of Health talking a great game about national pharmacare seven or eight months ago. I wonder why that was; maybe there was a federal election happening at the time. This Liberal Minister of Health said he was going to lead the charge for a national pharmacare program for the people of Ontario and the

people of Canada; he was going to call all the health ministers together, gather them all like little chickens and put together a national pharmacare program for the people of Canada and the people of Ontario.

In this budget, the changes this Liberal government was barrelling ahead with, and may still barrel ahead with, to increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors are going backwards. It is the opposite of the principle of pharmacare; it is the opposite of the principle of universality. The principle of universal access to care is not what this government believes in. They showed it clearly in the budget. That principle says that regardless of who you are, regardless of your income, regardless of your age, you should have access to the medications you need, just like you should have access to the other health care services you need, whether it's a hospital, a doctor, a community health clinic or surgery. That's the principle, that's what universal health care is and that's what a pharmacare program would look like.

So it is shocking that the Liberals once again talk a good game when it comes to saying something that helps them politically, that helps them with their political fortunes, because that's all they care about. They talk that good game, and then they turn around and stick it to seniors in their budget. They do exactly the opposite, in their budget, of what they say publicly when they are trying to get votes or trying to get help for their friends who are running in an election. That's what this Liberal government is all about, Speaker: It's more about what's good for the Liberal Party, whether it's provincial or federal, than it is about what is good for the people of Ontario. They've been in office far too long, Speaker. They have lost their way. They have seriously lost their way. It's all about them, and not about the people.

The bottom line, Speaker, is that the principles of universality, the principles of a pharmacare program are the principles that our health care system in this country was built on. Those are the principles that seniors actually fought for when it comes to the establishment of our health care system in this country. It's an important principle and it's a principle that New Democrats will stand for every single day, day in and day out, unlike the Liberal Party in Ontario.

That is the principle we should be building pharmacare on, not clawing back drug coverage for the people who need it most. Seniors like Grace simply cannot afford anyone taking advantage of them, especially not their government. Seniors cannot afford to have their government try to take advantage of them like the Liberals did in this budget.

Speaker, the bottom line is that the Premier could have made much better choices, but once again, the Liberals chose not to: on jobs, on fighting climate change in a way that actually works and on protecting the basics like health care and our kids' schools. Now more than ever, we can see two distinct visions for the future of this province. There's one view—the Premier's view and the Liberal view—that is far, far removed from the challenges of struggling families, young parents and seniors. It is completely out of touch for the people of Ontario.

0930

Then there's our view, Speaker, the view that New Democrats, the NDP caucus and I, share. We believe as New Democrats that we have the potential to create a more fair, more equal and more prosperous future for all Ontarians—all Ontarians—not just the chosen Liberal few, where we actually tackle inequality and where we close the growing gap in this province—the gaps that are growing and have been growing for the last dozen years under the Liberal watch.

The Premier could have made much better choices. Instead, this budget has the wrong priorities and does little or nothing to help the vast majority of Ontarians. Instead, the Premier is selling off Hydro One to private investors, against the wish of Ontarians. She's continuing to underfund Ontario's hospitals; she's making more cuts to our kids' classrooms, cutting the services that people rely on, to the tune of \$1.2 billion; and doubling the cost of medication for seniors. All of this while doing virtually nothing to reduce wait times for home care, doing virtually nothing to improve access to long-term care, doing virtually nothing to improve the quality of care that seniors receive, doing virtually nothing to address the challenges facing northern or rural Ontario and doing exactly nothing, zero, for child care. Those are the choices that this Liberal Premier has made.

Despite a lot of lofty talk over the last four years, very little has changed under this Premier. In fact, many things have gotten worse. Her top priority, unfortunately, always seems to be—always seems to be—helping out the Liberal Party rather than helping Ontarians, rather than helping Ontario families. It's always about what's good for the Liberals, what gives them more votes, what gives them more power, what gives them more opportunity. That's what it's all about for them. That's what we've come to after a dozen years of Liberals in office here in Ontario.

This budget was a missed opportunity, and it shows Ontarians how out of touch this government has become, how out of touch the Premier, her cabinet and her MPPs are with the people's priorities. Speaker, Ontarians deserve so much better than that. Ontarians deserve a Premier and a government that is committed to tackling and taking on inequality and providing real opportunity for all Ontarians, not just the ones that actually help the Liberal Party to reach its goals, but ones that actually help Ontario reach our goals: to have a province that's more equal, to have a province that's thriving, to have a province where more people share in the opportunity and the prosperity that Ontario can create. But that's not what it's all about for this Liberal Party; that's not what it's about for this Liberal Premier.

We should be able to make sure that people have opportunity and hope regardless of where you live in this province or who you are. If you don't have a pipeline to the Liberals, you should still be able to do okay in Ontario. You should still be able to have your priorities put forward by your government. You should have the basics, at least, covered off by your government, things

like health care, education, jobs—the basics. But those things aren't on the agenda of our Premier in this province. The thing on the agenda of our Premier in this province and her team is exactly that: her and her team. That's what we've come to in this province. It's very sad and it's very disappointing; and more and more people are telling me, as I travel the province, how disappointed they are, how disillusioned they are, how unhappy they are. They thought things were going to be different with Kathleen Wynne. She told them it was going to be different, but it's more of the same—and, in fact, it's worse.

New Democrats are committed, though. We are committed to providing a government that actually will build a province in which every single person can succeed, in which the basics are taken care of and in which we can be proud of our health care system; of our education system; of the jobs that are created; and of the care that we take for our most vulnerable and for our seniors. That's what New Democrats are all about. That's the kind of government we would run in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's always a pleasure to stand in my place and bring the voices of the people of Kitchener–Waterloo to the Legislature. Quite honestly, I feel responsible in this position that I hold as the finance critic to actually bring the voices of Ontarians, the people that we heard across this province throughout the budget consultations, to this place, to this debate, because the people's voices and their priorities and what they need to see from a government is not contained in this budget document; it is not.

On Monday, I was doing a tour in Kitchener and in Brantford. I wanted to go out and speak to the people, the seniors in this province, who quite honestly were sideswiped. They were sidelined. They didn't see this coming, this change in the deductible for their prescription medication. They didn't know that the rules of engagement were seriously going to shift away from them and away from, really, fairness on the prescription issue. Those voices need to be heard by this government.

Yesterday, when I asked the question of the finance minister about this change—particularly as it was International Women's Day and particularly as this change and the shift in policy is going to significantly impact senior women in the province of Ontario. I know that for a fact because I went out and I talked to them.

We were at the Seniors' Resource Centre in Brantford. There was a pharmacist at the table as well, and she said, "Well, this threshold will increase access, so they don't have to pay the deductible." We have no issue with this. What we have an issue with is that this government almost doubled the cost of the deductible for those making \$19,000 and over. The women who were sitting around the table were completely shocked by this change. This is not what they ever expected from the government, because they are already struggling day in and day out. Sharon, for instance, said, "What else can they do to us?"

That's what this government needs to hear. They need to hear the genuine concern. The women, particularly around this table yesterday, felt completely vulnerable. But at the end of the meeting, they were angry and they were mad. You know, Mr. Speaker, you don't want to mess with seniors who get a bee in their bonnet and who see a basic injustice happening to them.

This Premier said that she's going to lead from the activist centre. We should thank her because she's creating a growing number of senior activists in the province of Ontario, and they're going to show up in this place. They're signing these petitions and they're working in their communities and they're raising their voices because they know that it is fundamentally is unfair that you, without consultation, double the cost of their deductible, increase their copayments and, for some reason, you get to decide, this government gets to decide, who is affluent and who is not. That, for us, is such a strong indicator as to how big the disconnect is that this Liberal government has with the people of this province.

As I mentioned, these seniors did not see their priorities reflected in this budget. Harry, who came to the pharmacy in Kitchener, shared a story with us which I think every MPP needs to hear because it goes back to the health care piece. Harry said, "Listen, my wife was frail for 10 years," and he subsidized her long-term care to the tune of \$100,000. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? It was because she received only 16 minutes of care in the morning and 16 minutes of care at night, and she needed a lot of assistance. He personally could not do it, so he actually had to hire somebody to come in and help him do it. That is the state of long-term care in the province of Ontario.

Harry—God love Harry—is dedicated now. He's going to fight the good fight. He's going to stand up to this government. He's going door to door in his neighbourhood. He's getting signatures for the petition, and he's going to come to Queen's Park. He wants to actually see this in action.

0940

To your credit, you've lit a fire of activism for the seniors, and they're not going to take it anymore. I'm proud to have been part of that round table, and they were so grateful somebody was listening to them. That's essentially what they said, but there was definitely heartbreaking moments. It takes such courage for seniors to share the reality of their lives, because they're proud people.

Jean said to us, "You know, this is going to mean the difference between me eating, heating and getting medication. I just don't know if I can take it anymore." She said this in front of the media who were there, who were taking pictures. She's got nothing left to lose, so she's willing to fight the good fight. And we're willing to fight the good fight.

Ironically, this government is out now consulting on this change. Normally what happens is that you consult first, you listen first, you pay attention to the people, you address the problem, and then you make a change. Not this government—nope, not this government.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: There are some words I could use, but I wouldn't right now. It would be unparliamentary and I would not want to do that.

They're catching up to their own announcements. They were even catching up to their own announcements on the so-called free tuition. We, of course, support increased access for students to go to post-secondary institutions, because it has become harder and harder for them to do so in the province of Ontario. Since 2003, tuition has doubled under this government.

Yesterday, when we met with the members from OCUFA and talked about the conditions that are currently the reality on our university campuses—huge class numbers and more part-time faculty—it seems that this government is just content to say, "Look at this: We're going to do free tuition for this group of people. Just focus over here. Don't look at the real issues that are the reality for our post-secondary education institutions."

We heard that in the north, when we were on the budget consultation tour. Northern colleges and universities said, "You know what? It's good that you gave us a little bit of mental health money. We really need it. We need some funding for our First Nations students. That transition is really difficult and we want to make sure they're successful. But we don't have a roof. We need a roof. We need some funding for capital, so we can plan."

That's what I brought to those round tables: that the disconnect for this budget is that this government followed a flawed process. I think it's the first time in the history of the province that the government went out to seven locations, two of them here in Toronto, went through the process of listening and asking questions and being engaged, got on the plane, drove to places and spent a good deal of time together, and then—we just finalized the report. The finance committee just finished their report that we're going to give to the finance minister, which is supposed to inform this budget.

I shared this with the seniors yesterday, and they saw right through it. It is the height of arrogance and entitlement. We have never seen that under any government. One lady told me, "You need to hold the powerful accountable." I wrote it on my budget document: "Hold the powerful accountable," because that's where the power is, and when power becomes so entrenched in their own priorities, in their own value system, even though they're elected to serve the people of this province, that is when a democracy is undermined, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we see.

This is why this budget is so—we can't support this budget. We can't support this budget, because there are so many flaws. It was a flawed process. It doesn't honour the democracy of this province.

When I go through this budget and reflect on what we heard, one of the strongest moments was actually in Hamilton. It was really interesting to see the leaders' engagement with the minister responsible for child poverty, because there's such a vast difference of opinion on this issue. But when we heard that there is the equivalent of 270 classrooms of children who use food banks in Hamil-

ton, that's a serious stat that should leave us all breathless, because in 2016 we have the solutions for child poverty. Because it was International Women's Day yesterday, I feel compelled to say that when you raise women out of poverty, their children also follow.

When this Premier was first elected, she said she was going to use research and evidence-based decision-making; she was going to bypass that partisan route. She was going to put policies and legislation in place which were proven to be effective—you'll remember this, Mr. Speaker. The evidence in 2016 on the value of early learning in care: It cannot be disputed.

Charles Pascal, who did the original report for this government, made a recommendation of using the current infrastructure in the province of Ontario, which are our schools. He recommended building a seamless day of child care. People have already invested in those schools, the current infrastructure is already there, so you actually build programming around a school. Of course, you can't build programming around a school when those schools are closing, and we see those schools closing all over the province. His recommendation was to build that seamless day, use the current infrastructure, stabilize those schoolaged child care situations around the community hub and then stabilize the zero to 3.8. This plan would have revolutionized child care in the province of Ontario, but this government backed away from it.

In Waterloo region, I have to tell you, when I was chair of the school board, we stayed to the plan. We now have almost 2,000 child care spaces, at no cost to the taxpayer. It's based on a user fee. It's a not-for-profit model. It builds on before-and-after programming around the day. Almost every family who attends these schools has a choice of child care, at no cost to the taxpayer, because the user fee is a not-for-profit model. The more students who come into the school, the cost of the child care goes down. Pascal had it right; the Liberals had it wrong when they backed away from it.

The reality for child care in the province of Ontario today is that we have a patchwork, broken framework where this government often quotes full-day kindergarten as a solution. People in the province of Ontario do not work from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; they just don't. Despite the fact that now—what's that new word?—we have contemporary—

Interjection: Contemporary mobile employment.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Contemporary mobile workers. Language is so important, isn't it, Mr. Speaker? We can "broaden the ownership"; we can "modernize." People need to see right through the language of this government. When you follow the money, as the finance critic for the PC Party and I do on a regular basis, you can see the real priorities of this government. Quite honestly, the people of this province do not see their priorities reflected in this budget.

Child care: What a shock for us to not see any new money. What is happening in the province of Ontario is that the private sector—corporations—have moved into Ontario. This government, by default, by not having a

plan, by not having a strategy, has opened the door for corporations, and they seem content to have big-box child care corporations manage the system. They're even willing to give them subsidies to do so instead of building a truly universal child care system that's affordable and accessible.

When I look at this budget through a gender lens—and I think that in 2016 we're starting to do that more and more—I see the patchwork of systems to deal with violence against women. Last night, our leader and some of our members were at an event that was honouring the front-line activists and the front-line workers who deal day in and day out with violence against women, particularly partner violence. They were honoured for their work. What a difficult job it is, because they've been fighting upstream for so many years. What amazing, resilient women. This was called WomanACT; it was the first time they've had these awards.

Before they started the awards, they went through a list of all the women who have died in Toronto through partner violence. If this government or any minister on that side of the House saw that video and read those names out loud to honour those women, then you would not be reducing the Partner Assault Response Program in the province of Ontario; you just wouldn't, because this program worked.

0950

To hear the Attorney General respond to the questions from our critic on this issue is heartbreaking, but it also is so frustrating, because they're content to water it down. Just like with child care, like the coalition said, they are content to race to the bottom.

Ontarians deserve better, Mr. Speaker. They deserve better. They deserve a program that will actually partner with male partners—and other partners, quite honestly—to ensure relationships that are healthy in the province of Ontario, so we don't have to build more shelters and we don't have to develop more hostels where women can seek shelter with their children. Women bring their children with them, and we often forget that.

The other missing piece in this budget is any sort of comprehensive housing strategy. Anybody who has been looking at poverty and trying to address it comprehensively understands that there are some key components to addressing it. Housing would be one of those issues. We're supposed to get some sort of a plan later this spring on housing, but the municipal affairs ministry saw a \$20-million cut. It's hard to understand how municipalities across the province, particularly in the north—I have to say, the state of northern housing is alarming. In some areas it's at a crisis. For them to do a \$20-million cut to that issue—I don't understand how housing cannot be a priority when (1) it does create jobs and (2) it does stabilize the economy. All of the research demonstrates that when you have a model of delivering housing in a responsible and equitable way, then those people who are actually so marginalized in our society find a way to be stabilized.

Kitchener-Waterloo is a fairly affluent riding, but we are going to see two homes closed this week. OneROOF

has 10 youths with acute needs. They have acute mental health issues and addiction issues, and I've asked the minister for some bridge funding to get us through to this announcement. We've been waiting for this announcement for a long time, but these 10 youths are actually going to be out on the streets. There's a cost of keeping them in a house where they get support and where they're safe and where they're receiving some assistance; and there's a huge cost for them to be back on the street.

Where is the compassion? It begs the question: Who really is in charge in this government? Because when we see the disconnect from the real lived experiences and the stories that Ontarians chose to share with this government around affordability of life, around housing, around child care, around health care and mental health needs, and to see that truly not reflected in this document begs the question: Why are we here?

We are here, very clearly, in our position as New Democrats to hold this government to account and try to bring the real voices of Ontarians to this debate. Listening to our leader, Andrea Horwath, and listening to the members who have had a chance to speak to this budget, all of our communities have real issues that actually have some creative solutions.

For instance, we saw the 1% increase to health care in this budget after four years of hospital freezes across the province. We heard the impact of those freezes across the province, from Windsor to Thunder Bay to here in Toronto. But there were delegations who came to us and made submissions, like Barry Hunt from Class1. He has developed a UV technology to address infections in hospitals. That's a smart investment.

When you look at the stats as to how many people contract a disease when they're in a hospital and faced with serious infections, instead of an ounce of prevention, instead of investing in a good Ontario company and ensuring that infection does not take over our hospital systems—because we have had serious shutdowns of whole wards of hospitals; the cost of that is huge. Why not be smart about this? Why not make the initial investment in a responsible way?

Invest Ottawa had an amazing idea to draw private sector investment, to incentivize investment in innovation. That's not reflected in this budget in a meaningful way. Little tokens—it's a bit of a teaser in this budget; right? The seniors I met with yesterday in Brantford said, "Well, is this a robbing-Peter-to-pay-Paul kind of budget?" And then one of the other ladies said, "No, it's a robbing poor Peter to pay poor Paul." They see right through it.

The cap-and-trade bill: I think our leader really did address this in a significant way. For us, we want to see an effective program. Our critic has been very consistent on this. Consistency matters in this place, as you've recently discovered. For us, the issue of fairness comes to the forefront as well. When this program was rolled out in California, the large emitters were included in the program at the onset, as you would expect. Yet this government is going to give a pass for a number of large

emitters right at the beginning. Now, it's shocking because everyone talks about this crisis and that we need to accelerate this cap-and-trade plan and that it needs to be effective. Yet the strategy fails to build any of those issues, one of fairness and one of transparency. You can't blame us for being a little suspicious and a little worried about the transparency issue, because we have issues with the Trillium Trust, as it was designed.

While this government seems to be content with rolling out these ideas, if you will, our job, as the official opposition—as the opposition; we are not official—is to pull back those layers and expose the weaknesses in that plan and hopefully then inform the strategy going forward. The most important thing for us on the cap-and-trade is (1) that it works, (2) that there's transparency and (3) that the government build some fairness into that. I don't think that's too much for the people of this province to expect, quite honestly.

The last point I want to address is really on jobs and the priorities of this government as they disconnect with this budget. This budget missed its targets on job creation. This budget missed this government's targets on GDP growth, on employment growth and on business investment. Even though the Auditor General has come out and criticized this government for the way that they allocate granting funds to companies—you'll remember, Mr. Speaker, that she highlighted the fact that 80% of the grants that were distributed were done so by invitation only, not through a public RFP process. That doesn't instill confidence.

I think that the economy, as it's moving ahead right now—

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's working really well.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Maybe it's working really well for your friends, but it doesn't instill confidence because when other companies see how this government is working and how you actually have to get in that door—you need to be invited into that door to access that money—that undermines the confidence in the economy of the province of Ontario, and it's a huge injustice.

The last thing I want to mention is that the privatization agenda of this government has accelerated. It's hard for us even to keep track of it. When the AG revealed the fact that road maintenance contracts were given to a certain number of companies, the MTO issued fines for those companies because they weren't doing the work. Do you know why they were not doing the work? Because profit was the driver. This government didn't even take the time to collect the fines. That shows you who their primary interest is.

Meanwhile, in this budget it says you're going to review the clawback of social assistance. We welcome that clawback change. The minister said she's going to take a whole year to consult on something that she's already admitted is wrong: taking \$280 away from the poorest, most marginalized women in the province of Ontario and taking a whole year to study it. Meanwhile, you can sell off Hydro One in 10 months.

The disconnect is mind-boggling. How can this government figure out a way to claw back \$40 or \$50 from

the poorest women in the province of Ontario and their children—talking out of one side of their mouth about poverty reduction—and then fail to actually do their due diligence around the privatization of road maintenance in the province of Ontario?

1000

This government has lost its way. This government is not paying attention to the people of this province. People see this, though; they see it. They see it for what it is

We cannot support this budget. It is contradictory in nature. It is not reflective of the voices of the real people of this province. It was designed on a flawed process. It's a flawed budget. We will not be supporting it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. David Orazietti: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to the budget bill, Bill 173. I may be sharing my time with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure as well.

I want to respond to the member opposite from Kitchener-Waterloo as well as the leader of the third party, because they left out a lot of important information. Ironically enough, they fail to recognize the countless benefits for Ontarians that are presented in this budget. Being as selective as they've been, I think I have an obligation to help inform Ontarians of the important measures that we're taking, the important steps that we're taking in the budget, and the reasons why we would ask all members in this House to support the budget bill.

First of all, let's talk a little bit about the financial side very quickly. We are on track to balance our budget. We faced one of the most serious economic recessions in the history of this province, and we're on track to balance the budget. In addition, that is not coming at the expense of important investments that we're making for Ontarians, and we're going to talk about those as well for the next few minutes.

Let's talk about the important infrastructure investments that we're making all over Ontario. I haven't heard any members opposite talk about infrastructure dollars that they don't want in their communities, that they don't want to see invested. We get questions repeatedly in the Legislature about spending more money in various ridings all over Ontario for a variety of projects.

We've got the largest investment in the history of the province: \$137 billion over the next 10 years. Some \$300 million is going to the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund for small, rural and northern communities—I know in northern Ontario this is very important to many communities; I know it's important to my community in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie—as well as a specific allotment for Connecting Links, those roadways and highways that are provincial highways that go through communities, where 75% of the traffic is really provincial traffic and not local. There is a fund to help support those communities that are small, northern and rural that don't have the resources to help pay for the infrastructure that they need. We're increasing that fund to \$30 million—another good reason to be supporting the budget.

Expanded GO services as well: We'll talk a little bit about that. Infrastructure for schools: \$11 billion for schools. There's \$12 billion for hospitals.

I know the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure will perhaps want to highlight the \$400-million Business Growth Initiative to help create jobs in the province, with a \$30-million investment going to the global export strategy.

There are countless programs to help support economic development and job creation in this province, and we are leading the way. I certainly commend the leader for his leadership in that area.

Let's talk a little bit about health care spending in Ontario because there has been some misinformation as of late around the health care spending in the province. I have been highlighting this in my own riding through various communications in our media to highlight the fact that every year that we have been in government, the Ministry of Health budget has increased. It has not gone down for a single year: \$50.8 billion, another \$1 billion for health care, a 1% increase in hospital-based budget funding—that's \$345 million for operating expenses. I know the hospitals are pleased about that.

When we talk about investments that we're making in health care, we can also include \$130 million for expanded cancer care and a 5% increase for home care funding. This is very important. Members opposite talk about the importance of services at home. They continually bring examples of individuals who have these concerns, and here we are on this side, Speaker, putting money into the budget in these areas. We would hope that the members opposite would support that, including, as a start—this is another area—the free shingles vaccine, which will help to reduce—it's a pocketbook expense: \$170 as an out-of-pocket expense, covered now by the province moving forward.

Let's talk about some of the other investments. I know that if the members opposite have spent any time talking to the hospice associations across the province, they would know that the \$75-million investment that's taking that spending up to \$155 million going forward is money well spent. I know the hospice in our community is very excited about that. This is a program that our government began, and began funding, and continued to reinvest in. But the members opposite are somewhat out of touch when it comes to those particular issues and don't understand that that's another very good reason why they should be supporting the budget.

Let's talk about autism services: \$333 million in expanded support for children with autism. We talk about support for children in the province; this is something the opposition have raised. We're putting more money in the budget for this as well, Speaker—another great reason to support the budget.

Affordable housing: I heard the member opposite talk about affordable housing. What do we have? Some \$178 million for affordable housing—another positive reason to support the investment in the budget.

Social assistance rate increases: another 1.5%. Special needs increases: \$17.8 million.

I want to talk about something that is very important to our government and, I know, to all members of the Legislature: ending violence against indigenous women and girls across Ontario. We have invested \$100 million and will be helping to support and place workers in First Nation communities throughout Ontario to end violence against women and aboriginal girls in the province of Ontario. This is generational violence, long-standing, and we need the resources in the budget that will help to reduce and ultimately end violence against aboriginal women and girls in this province. We would call on the members opposite to support the budget, again, for another good reason.

Making life easier for Ontarians: certainly eliminating the \$30 fee for Drive Clean; capping hospital parking fees—we talked about this—another positive initiative over the next three years. We announced back in January that we would be making this investment and helping to offset these types of costs for everyday Ontarians who use these services. We think that is another example of an important program.

When it comes to investments for students—when we talk about students being our future and young people being our future, we need to demonstrate that by supporting them in every way possible. One of the other areas where we're making some huge investments, in addition to creating, over the term of our government, approximately 200,000 additional spaces in post-secondary education, is making very substantive investments in student aid and loans for students—I believe the most generous in the country when it comes to these types of investments.

In the budget, we're proposing to create a coordinated, streamlined, simple, upfront grant that's fully integrated. It makes it easier for parents and students to navigate the system. This upfront grant will ensure that families in Ontario with a combined income of \$50,000 or lower will have essentially free tuition in the province of Ontario. We think that is a way to break down barriers, to create accessibility, to have all young people in the province of Ontario reach their full potential.

As someone who taught for 10 years in Sault Ste. Marie and in the Sault Ste. Marie area, I know how important educational opportunities are to young people in this province. I'm very, very pleased to see this in the budget and to know that the feedback through the consultation process that took place right across the province is getting the results Ontarians want to see.

1010

We can talk about that as well, Speaker, because I know that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs came to Sault Ste. Marie and heard from representatives in our community: heard from our hospice representative, Theresa Mudge, who is excited about the hospice investments; heard from the college president at Sault College, who's happy about the investments in post-secondary; and heard from Ron Gagnon, the CEO of the Sault Area Hospital, who's happy with the base budget increase.

When the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs came to my community in Sault Ste. Marie and listened to the local representatives and the local community leaders, the results that are in the budget bear out the fact that we were listening to and the committee was listening to the types of comments, the concerns, the areas of investment and those priorities that residents—certainly in my riding and I know ridings throughout Ontario—provided their feedback on and we heard from. I'm really pleased with those investments.

Speaker, in addition: In relation to the tuition piece that's in the budget, it's going to make tuition more affordable for middle-income families. More than 50% of students from families with incomes of \$83,000 or less will receive non-repayable grants in excess of the average college or university tuition, and no students will receive less through the Ontario Student Grant than they are currently eligible to receive through the Ontario tuition grant. We think that's great news. That is great news for the future of this province; it's great news for young people in this province. In addition, we're going to be supporting mature students more broadly than we have in the past when it comes to these types of investments.

While the members opposite continue to express their concerns and look at some of the areas that they believe have not been supported to the extent that they would like them supported, they completely dismiss all of the other benefits and all of the other investments that we have made—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Waterloo.

Hon. David Orazietti: —in infrastructure and health care, education, autism services, and ending violence against women. Speaker, it is a lengthy list.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo didn't hear me?

Hon. David Orazietti: I appreciate that, Speaker. Thank you very much.

The lengthy list that is in the budget, and the investments—so we're not only on track to balance the budget and take responsible steps when it comes to the fiscal challenges that we face in this province because we know that the interest that we are paying to service the debt is eroding our ability to further invest in the services and the priorities that we, as Ontarians, all want to see. That is problematic, so we need to address that. We can't simply ignore that.

While some members, perhaps, in this Legislature would like to simply say, "Let's ignore that and let's just open the vault," so to speak, and spend on whatever the item might be, I think we've reached a very pragmatic budget here. We have landed on some very important priorities that, from the numerous consultations that were conducted in 13 different cities with more than 700 individuals, with town halls reaching more than 52,000 Ontarians with over 500 written submissions—the extent

of the budget consultations, both with the Minister of Finance, the standing committee and I know that individual members held in their ridings really helped to shape the budget. We listened to Ontarians. What you'll find in the budget, as a result of that input and feedback from Ontarians, are the very important pieces we all are concerned about seeing invested in in the budget.

As I say, Speaker, the members might choose to dismiss the budget because there are a couple of items perhaps that they feel we have not invested in as fully as they would have liked to in the budget, but by and large, I know that Ontarians across the province are pleased with the countless areas of investment that we are making through the various ministries of government and in programs and priorities that they have specifically taken the time to come to these sessions and to provide their input on.

I'm going to encourage all members of the Legislature to support this budget and support Bill 173.

With that, Speaker, I'm going to turn the balance of the time over, for the remaining few minutes, to our Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you, but unfortunately, it is 10:15.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just as a courtesy, I'm going to remind members, because it looks like we have quite a few guests: Let's keep it in the vein we intended, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Today is a great day because there are so many people here from Nepean-Carleton. I would like to welcome those slot workers from the Rideau Carleton Raceway, whom I'm proud to support.

We also have some Catholic school board trustees here. I would be remiss not to point out Spencer Warren from my constituency, and also a family friend of ours from the Cornwall area, Todd Lalonde. It's wonderful to see them here. I hope we welcome them.

Mr. Paul Miller: It is my privilege to introduce Bishop Douglas Crosby from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton, and also Pat Daly, chair of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. Welcome.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm pleased to welcome to the House student representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. They're here this week for their annual lobby week. CFSO and student leaders across the province are really very important partners with our government. I really appreciate the work that they've done with us on sexual violence and, most recently, on our transformation of the OSAP system in the budget.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to welcome Brian Gerskup, a constituent from Thornhill, who's here today for the Information Technology Association of Canada digital health day. Welcome, Brian.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It doesn't happen very often, but all the way from Timmins is Colleen Landers, who's with the English Catholic board and also a very good

friend. Welcome to our Legislature.

Mr. Grant Crack: I'd like to introduce members of the Friends and Advocates for Catholic Education who are present in the gallery this morning. This group includes the Ontario bishops' council, led by His Eminence Cardinal Collins; representatives of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association; and representatives of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. They'll be meeting with MPPs throughout the day and will be hosting a reception at 5 p.m. in the legislative dining room this afternoon. Welcome to Queen's Park, everyone.

And hi, Todd Lalonde. Welcome.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to welcome—*Applause*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Now behave.

The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce Joshua Palmer, Emma Palmer and their mom, Patty Naylor. I'll be having lunch with them in the legislative dining room. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to welcome our guests, employees of Ontario Lottery and Gaming from the Rideau slots, as well as PSAC members that are here today for question period.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Our page captain today is Sarah Mateus, and her father, Carolipo Mateus, is with us today in the gallery. Welcome.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to welcome Bev Eckensweiler. She's here representing the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board today.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to welcome a number of people who are guests today from Guelph, beginning with His Eminence Cardinal Collins, who is actually originally from Guelph; the chair of the Wellington Catholic school board, Marino Gazzola; and our page Ryan Eggens has his father, Michael Eggens, and his grandmother Patricia Eggens with us this morning.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's my great honour to welcome the Archbishop of Ottawa, Terrence Prendergast, to the Legislature. Welcome.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to welcome Zack Engle, who is in the gallery today. He's originally from the great riding of Oxford, and we're happy to have him here with us today. Welcome, Zack.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to welcome my colleague Sally Mosavat, from my constituency office, who is visiting Queen's Park today.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to welcome Archbishop Prendergast this morning, along with Todd Lalonde from the eastern Ontario Catholic school board.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I am pleased to introduce Thomas Thomas. He is the vice-chair of the Dufferin Catholic school board and is also a constituent of mine.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm here to introduce and welcome Akio Maroon. Akio is a constituent of Trinity-Spadina and a recipient of the 2016 Leading Women/Leading Girls Building Communities recognition certificate.

She is here today and joined by her friends Sasha Ruel, Emilie Ruel, Kai Cole, Desmond Cole, Freeyelle Menal Mehari, Jasbina Misir, Elizabeth Adekur-Carlson and Nicole McFadden. Welcome to you all.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to introduce members from the Information Technology Association of Canada—or ITAC—representing some of the leading companies in the ICT industry, who are here at Queen's Park today for their Digital Health Day. Welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'm pleased to welcome Michelle Griepsma, who is chair of the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, as well as a number of other trustees, who are former colleagues of mine. Welcome.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I notice, in the members' east gallery, that Bishop Fred Colli from the Diocese of Thunder Bay is here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I also want to welcome a very good friend of mine, Larry Rousseau, who is in the House. He represents the Public Service Alliance of Canada, National Capital Region. Welcome, Larry, and to all our friends.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to introduce my friend Abid Malik, who is way up there in the top, right behind us. He's a former staffer here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I certainly want to welcome Bishop Colli as well. I look forward to seeing him later today.

I also want to introduce Roman Jakubowski, who is the president of the Lakehead University Student Union. I think he's up here somewhere. There he is. Welcome. Good to see you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We also have with us today, in the Speaker's gallery, His Excellency Agustín García-López, the ambassador of Mexico, and His Excellency Nicolás Lloreda, the ambassador of Colombia. Please join me in welcoming them to the House.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, would you please join me in welcoming the family of the late Lorne Howard Maeck, MPP for Parry Sound during the 29th, 30th and 31st Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: son Doug and his wife, Ada; and daughter Janice Whitter, and her husband, Steve.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, for support, are Mr. David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament, and Mr. Steve Gilchrist, MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments, and also chairman of the Former Parliamentarians—or president; I'm not sure which one.

Of course, we also have, from Parry Sound, the former MPP for Parry Sound in the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments; Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey and

Parry Sound–Muskoka in the 37th; and former Premier of the province of Ontario, 38th Parliament, Mr. Ernie Eves.

1040

LORNE MAECK

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Lorne Howard Maeck, former member for Parry Sound, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise today on behalf of the Ontario NDP to pay tribute to the life of late MPP Lorne Maeck.

In his book The Greatest Generation, Tom Brokaw provides a glimpse into the lives of a cohort of men and women who came of age during the Great Depression, who stepped up to defend our freedoms in the Second World War and returned to post-war communities to set up as citizen-leaders who helped shape the institutions and lay the foundations of the communities which we are all proud to call home.

Brokaw sums up the men and women of this era as follows: "It may be historically premature to judge the greatness of a whole generation, but indisputably, there are common traits that cannot be denied. It is a generation that, by and large, made no demands of homage from those who followed and prospered economically, politically and culturally because of its sacrifices. It is a generation of towering achievement and modest demeanour, a legacy of their formative years when they were participants in and witness to sacrifices of the highest order. They know how many of the best of their generation didn't make it to their early 20s, how many brilliant scientists, teachers, spiritual and business leaders, politicians and artists were lost in the ravages of the greatest war the world has seen."

Although the book doesn't mention Lorne Maeck by name, a look at Lorne's life makes it clear that he is exactly the type of person Brokaw brings to life in his words. I never had the privilege of meeting Lorne, and I look forward to the remarks from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member from St. Catharines for their more personal recollections of the type of man he was. One of the highlights of the tributes is that they remind us of the humanity of this place, something that is unfortunately lost in the cut and thrust of partisan politics.

In reading up on Lorne in preparation for today, the articles and the accounts of his professional life and contributions to his community give us a good look into what made this man a special person. Though clearly a proud son of northern Ontario and the distinct traditions

of this special part of the province, the story of Lorne's origins resonate with people from all walks of life, from Timmins to Windsor and from Thunder Bay to Ottawa.

A second-generation Canadian of humble beginnings, Lorne understood that his opportunities were not just the product of hard work—and we know that he worked hard—but were also the result of incredible efforts and sacrifices from those who came before him. You see, Speaker, the common thread in Lorne's vocations and careers was that serving others was what mattered most.

Lorne's first memorable act on the road to a lifetime of public service came at age 17, when he left high school to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II. Upon returning home, Lorne joined the OPP, rising to the ranks of detective over the course of his policing career. Even Lorne's many business ventures encapsulated this idea of service, including the ownership of a gas station, a furniture store and a bus company.

Throughout his many successful careers, Lorne was never far from public service and political life, entering the public arena as councillor and then reeve in his hometown of South River prior to securing the nomination of the PC Party for the riding of Parry Sound. While the Conservatives boast a proud tradition in the Parry Sound area with PC representation dating back decades, Lorne's success as MPP follows the same pattern as the rest of his life: work hard, build on the opportunities provided by others and create new opportunities for those who have followed in your footsteps, just as others had done for you.

Lorne was no shoo-in for the post. He wasn't even the favourite for the PC nomination, but he understood something that is an essential lesson for those who aspire to public office. His success didn't come through the many accolades and accomplishments he brought to his candidacy but was established by his commitment to being the best possible representative he could for his community.

Although Lorne won the seat in his first try, his success was cemented by the work he did during the early stages of his tenure as MPP, building a reputation as an effective advocate for the people of Parry Sound. As a result, his efforts as their voice at Queen's Park didn't go unnoticed at home and a tough first election turned into a string of successes that helped him remain a fixture at Queen's Park in spite of successive minority governments in the mid-1970s.

Through all of his success at Queen's Park, where he served as parliamentary assistant, chief government whip and, finally, as the Minister of Revenue—back when we had revenue in this place, Speaker—Lorne never forgot that his primary responsibility was to be the voice of his riding, going as far as to open his home to people of his community to address their concerns, even as a cabinet minister, with his kitchen as a de facto constituency office.

At this time, I'd like to say a special thanks to Lorne's family members who join us here today. The life of an MPP has its challenges, but they're not carried only by the person whose name is on the ballot. Often, it is our

families who make the greatest sacrifices in order for us to have the privilege of serving our province. Thank you for sharing Lorne with us.

In the end, Lorne's career as MPP followed the same arc that marked much of his life. He took the opportunity that had been given to him and, through his hard work and dedication, used it to create opportunities for those who followed, including his successor who joins us here today and who also narrowly won the nomination and then followed Lorne's commitment to his community and service to build an effective career of his own.

The legacy that Lorne leaves isn't just about political achievements but serves as a testament to politics at its best: When a representative's longevity isn't determined by the party we represent but is a result of our commitment to the communities we have the privilege of serving. We would all do well to follow in his footsteps in this regard.

Lorne, thank you for your service to northern Ontario and to the people of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tributes?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I have a bit of an advantage, perhaps, over some of the House in that I actually served with many of the people who are being eulogized these days, including Lorne Maeck. I do recall that I served with the fathers of John Yakabuski and Norm Miller, both of whom knew Lorne Maeck extremely well and would testify to the fact that he was an extremely dedicated member of this Legislature and also a nice guy. The two don't always go together; sometimes people are nice people and members of the Legislature and sometimes it doesn't happen that way. But Lorne Maeck was both; I want to assure you of that.

I was particularly intrigued by a story he was telling about his humble beginnings. It goes to the fact that we in Canada—and we in Ontario, if we bring it to the provincial level— have an opportunity, even from very humble beginnings, to be able to serve in high public office. He rose to the category of being a cabinet minister as well as chief government whip, two, if not prestigious, extremely important areas of endeavour for a government.

Here's a description of the home, and this is quoting Lorne: "We were a very poor family. Our furniture was all homemade. There were no chairs, just benches made from slab wood we got at the sawmills. We had beds that were oat bags sewed together to the size of the bed and filled with beaver grass." Now that is truly a humble beginning. Of course, there were eight children in the family at the time, so there was a lot of competition for the attention of the parents.

You know that there were early struggles that took place, but Lorne overcame those. He was a successful businessman, as has been mentioned by the representative of the New Democratic Party. He also served in our air force, of course, which we thank him for very much, and in the Ontario Provincial Police, as well as running local businesses and being part of the community and adding to the economic benefit of the community.

Somebody who learned a lot from him is in the gallery today, and that's a person who was affectionately known as "Landslide Ernie," and that is former Premier of the province of Ontario Ernie Eves, who, after Lorne vacated his seat, rolled to victory by six votes. That's a clear indication of how much Lorne was liked and the reputation he had established. It would be difficult to follow in those footsteps, but nevertheless, I'm sure that the successor to Lorne Maeck who sits in the Speaker's gallery now learned a lot from him and was a strong supporter of his.

1050

It's also interesting to note, because we who serve in the Legislature today—and again I go back to Mr. Yakabuski and Mr. Miller. If you go back far enough, there were not constituency offices, so people came to the house. So Lorne Maeck, after spending some time in Toronto with the Legislature in session, would go home and there would be people in the kitchen, the living room and down in the basement who would be receiving their assistance from the member himself or herself in those days, compared to today where we have constituency offices that have computers, that have all kinds of electronic equipment and have some significant staff. And that is progress. It's a result, I think, of the Camp commission that that happened. So it was very challenging in those days, and it meant even more onus on the family to be part of the operation of a so-called constituency office that you would have in the community.

Second, it's interesting to note that those who serve in rural communities, and many in the House do today, recognize how much of a challenge that is, because you're representing not just one constituency. I have the privilege, as an urban member, of representing three quarters of the city of St. Catharines. So I have one city I deal with. I have school boards in this particular case: a Catholic board, a public board, a French board, a French Catholic and a French Protestant board. So what we have is a different circumstance as urban members.

The people who are in rural areas have to travel an awful lot, and so we often kid them about the mileage claims that they happen to have because they travel so much, but they genuinely do travel a lot. Some of them actually encounter OPP officers who are sitting there with, shall we say, cameras trying to determine the speed of those individuals. So they're much more vulnerable. I really think that serving a rural constituency—a remote constituency, particularly—is very difficult. So we're extremely grateful for him.

The last thing I want to mention is, because other things will be mentioned, that he was the chief government whip in a minority parliament, and that was a very difficult thing to do. I liked his comment that during his political career he moved from parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources, and then talked about the fact that to make the minority situation work, Maeck and the House leader would sit down with their counterparts from the Liberal and New Democratic parties to go through the legislation and budgets line by line to reach

compromises. Remember, it was a little bit rocky from 1975 to 1977, because minority government was a new experience for all members who were sitting at that time. I have to say that if I've ever observed minority government in this province, it worked best from 1977 to 1981, and we can thank Lorne Maeck and those who worked with him for making it a success at that time, making it operate as the people of this province would want.

We're very grateful once again to yet another family who have shared a member of their family with all the people of the province of Ontario and in particular with their constituency. Once again, our province is a better place because Lorne Maeck has served in this Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tributes?

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure today to pay tribute to Lorne Howard Maeck, former MPP for the great riding of Parry Sound. But first, let me welcome members of the family that have made it here to the Legislature today: son Doug Maeck and his wife Ada, and daughter Janice and husband Steve Whitter. Son Peter and his wife Sharon are not able to be here today but, Mr. Speaker, would like a copy of the proceedings, as you are always so good at providing.

I'm so happy that the former member for Parry Sound and Parry Sound–Muskoka and former Premier of the province, Ernie Eves, has taken the time to be here. Thank you, Ernie. It's always great to see Steve Gilchrist, who's head of the retired parliamentarians, taking the time to be here, and former Speaker Warner, who also comes to many of these proceedings.

I had the pleasure of knowing Lorne Maeck personally. In fact, I have a great picture in my home that I treasure, with three Parry Sound MPPs: Lorne Maeck, Ernie Eves and me. It was taken at the 2005 funeral of long-time former MPP Allister Johnston. And many of Lorne's family have been very helpful to me come election time. Niece Gail Maeck has very successfully run my election operations in South River for all of my elections since 2001. Gail and Les Maeck wanted to be here today, but they're away in someplace warmer today, unfortunately.

Lorne grew up in a tiny log cabin near South River, where his parents, Otto and Masilba, raised eight children. Lorne was the youngest of the family. In an interview with the Almaguin News, Lorne said, "We were a ... poor family. Our furniture was all homemade. There were no chairs, just benches made from slab wood we got at the sawmills. We had beds that were oat bags sewed together to the size of the bed and filled with beaver grass."

From these humble origins, Lorne went on to do so many things. He left high school at grade 10, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in the Second World War as a wireless air gunner. On his return to Canada, he served in the Ontario Provincial Police, becoming a detective. He was a true entrepreneur. After the OPP, he went on to operate several different businesses, including a gas station, bus company and furniture store.

He started his political career on council and then as reeve of South River. When former MPP Allister Johnston retired, with encouragement from Johnston, Lorne decided to run for the PC nomination. It was a tough battle for the nomination. That included the reeve of Burk's Falls, Stan Darling, who went on to be the MP for Parry Sound; Dr. Jack MacKay of Parry Sound; and Royce Macklaim of Parry Sound. Lorne won, but there were some hard feelings on the west side of Parry Sound that someone from east Parry Sound had won again. In fact, Royce Macklaim ran as an independent in the general election-I went and checked the records-and he came in second, with 25% of the vote. When I checked the poll results for the west Parry Sound area, Macklaim soundly won most of the polls around the town of Parry Sound.

After the election, Lorne Maeck reached out to Ernie Eves, a young lawyer from the town of Parry Sound, to make peace and get support from the town of Parry Sound. When I spoke with former Premier Eves, he told me that Lorne Maeck was one of the reasons he got involved in politics. Ernie ended up joining the Parry Sound riding association and served with a guy by the name of Mike Harris. At the time, the Parry Sound riding included Nipissing township and stretched all the way to Mattawa. So Lorne had a pretty good riding association, with two volunteers who would both go on to be Premier of Ontario.

Son Doug told me that he has a photo with young Mike, Ernie and Lorne. In fact, Ernie Eves and Mike Harris met while serving on the Parry Sound PC riding association. Ernie went on to serve as Lorne's association president and campaign manager.

I spoke with former Premier Mike Harris, who confirmed that he was volunteering both at the Nipissing and Parry Sound riding associations, as his home was in one riding and his business was in the other. He said that many people in Nipissing would travel down to South River to meet with Lorne, who was a government member, at his home with their provincial issues, as Nipissing adopted Lorne as their member. He said Lorne always had time for him and other people from Nipissing. Former Premier Harris said he would have liked to be here today, but he is out of the country.

Lorne went on to serve Queen's Park on many different committees and select committees as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources. Then in 1976, he was appointed the chief government whip by Premier William Davis.

Lorne had great respect for the Premier and told me that he really enjoyed the job of whip, especially because it gave him close access to Premier Davis. Son Doug told me that Lorne was in awe of Premier Davis, the only person he referred to as "the boss."

I spoke with former Premier Davis, who said that Lorne was a very decent individual, committed to his constituency, liked by everybody, and that he was very conscious of other people. He talked about how Lorne enjoyed his passion of woodworking in retirement, and that Lorne would send a gift of his handiwork to Davis each year at Christmas.

Lorne went on to be Minister of Revenue from 1978 until his retirement in 1981.

Lorne was very easygoing and not afraid to get his hands dirty and help out. Niece Gail Maeck told me the story of when Premier Bill Davis was coming to visit their campaign office in South River. Lorne showed up in his jeans and his plaid shirt to help get things ready for the visit. Some guy came in and started giving Lorne orders. Lorne complied at first, before saying, "And who are you?" The guy replied, "I happen to be security for the Premier." Lorne replied, "Do you know the Minister of Revenue?" The guy replied, "Well, not personally." Lorne replied, "Well, I happen to be him, so stop ordering me around."

Lorne loved to play music. He played guitar and sang, and had a band called the Minister of Revenue and His Political Poll Cats, with band members Bob Maeck, Pete Bray and Ross Gutjahr, and they would play at fundraising events for skating clubs, hockey teams and other community events.

1100

Former Premier Eves told me, "Lorne Maeck was a thoroughly decent guy," "as honest as the day is long," and "one of the reason I went into politics." He said that people loved him and that he took a genuine interest in their affairs.

He told me the story of when Lorne was Minister of Revenue. Two government assessors had visited a property to assess it, and one returned later to steal firewood from the property. Lorne learned of this and wanted the assessor fired immediately. When he learned that a minister couldn't just fire people, he instead offered a promotion to him, sent him to the Far North and asked him to report back in two years. The assessor then quit. I should mention that Ernie Eves did a fine job delivering the eulogy at Lorne Maeck's funeral in 2014.

Lorne retired from politics before the 1981 election, and in a recent interview with the Almaguin News he talked about returning to the riding after the week at Oueen's Park:

"'Maybe that was the hardest part. By the time you got home you were played out and there were all these people waiting for you,' said Maeck, noting his kitchen and living room on Marie Street in South River would be lined with constituents waiting for their man to return to speak with them." As was mentioned, that was prior to constituency offices.

He went on to say, "Being an MPP is a difficult thing. All the problems that really affect people come from the province.

"By the time I had my 10 years in I was tired. I don't think I could have gone another four years. I'm the sort of guy who takes his problems to bed with him."

Lorne was married to his lovely wife, Ivy, for 62 years. In fact, concerns for her health were part of the reason he decided to retire from politics.

Thank you to the family of Lorne Howard Maeck for his service to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the members for their thoughtful, kind and heartfelt comments. To the family: Thank you for the gift of Lorne. As you've heard, the affection with which he is held in this House is a reflection of him, and our respects to the families of all members—that it takes to be an MPP.

As has been mentioned, we will provide you with a copy of Hansard and a DVD to show you the tributes for your memory. Thank you again.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Repeatedly in this House, we have warned about a crisis in corrections. The state of our correctional facilities is endangering inmates and officers who work there. Because of this government's negligence, the crisis has moved into our communities and is threatening the safety of Ontario families.

Today, there was a shocking report in the Globe and Mail that says that due to persistent lockdowns at Ontario jails, convicted offenders are regularly getting extra credit for pre-trial custody. In one case, a convicted offender has had his sentence for a firearms offence reduced by three months because of the appalling conditions he had to endure at the Toronto South Detention Centre.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell Ontarians why she's giving gun-toting criminals a get-out-of-jail-free pass?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the minister will want to comment on the reforms that are taking place as we speak. We've been very clear that we know that it is an extremely high priority for all Ontarians that we have safety inside of our correctional facilities and on the streets of this province, so we're moving forward with a Strategy for a Safer Ontario. We understand that there needs to be transformation within the system, and that goes to safety for the people who work within the facilities and safety for the inmates.

I would also say that it is very important to us that we move more to a system where there is rehabilitation, that we put back some of the supports that are needed. We know that there are literacy issues in our facilities. We know that there are mental health concerns. We need to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Premier has not addressed the shocking Globe and Mail report that convicted criminals are getting out early because of the conditions of provincial facilities.

This winter, I went up and visited the—*Interjections*.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: —Thunder Bay jail. I found the conditions shocking. I challenge—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I've said "order" once to hopefully stop it; if it continues, I'll go to the individual.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I challenge the Premier to visit the provincial correctional facility in Thunder Bay. If that is too far, my challenge today is, will you visit the Toronto South Detention Centre?

The reality is, the conditions in these provincial facilities are allowing convicted criminals to get out early.

Will the Premier commit to visiting one of the correctional facilities? No matter how close or how far it is, will the Premier commit to visiting—yes or no? I don't want to hear about previous visits two years ago for ribbon cuttings. Will you visit and see the conditions today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. First, I'd like to ask the government side to try to stop

doing my job. I'll take care of it.

Second of all, just a gentle reminder, please: to the Chair. You can still ask the same question, but just ask it to me.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as I have told this House many times, I have visited corrections facilities and I will do so again. But the most important thing is that we understand what the transformations are that are necessary, what are the better rehabilitation and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It goes both ways. The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the party opposite has a totally different philosophy on this front than we do. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition sat in a government that actually believed that more incarceration, that bigger jails, that more—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds-Grenville.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that more people in jail

was the way to go.

I actually believe that having facilities that support rehabilitation, that provide activities, that provide mental health, that provide rehabilitative services—that that's what needs to happen in our system. That's—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: This crisis in corrections is going to escalate. The reality is, this is not about rehabilitation; this is about the conditions of the facilities. The mayor of Thunder Bay called the correctional facility up there a rathole. The conditions in these jails are allowing convicted criminals to get out early. That's what I'm hoping the Premier will address.

What I have heard from correctional officers across the province is that the conditions are deplorable. What we've seen, Mr. Speaker, is a loophole that is allowing convicted criminals to get out early.

Will the Premier commit that she will close this loophole? Will the Premier commit that she will stand up for public safety, stand up for Ontario families and make sure that our communities are safe?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Deputy House leader, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for the

opportunity to respond.

The loophole that the member opposite is talking about is a federal piece of legislation that he voted for. That's the loophole that he's talking about. The problem that we are facing in correctional services today in terms of overcapacity—which is true across the country—is a result-

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Everybody calm

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. That will do.

A reminder: provincial policy. Thank you.

Hon. Yasir Nagvi: The challenges in terms of capacity that have been faced by correctional services in Ontario and across the country—and I have had the chance to speak with other ministers as well—is a direct result of the dumb-on-crime policies that the previous Harper government brought into place that had a significant impact. That is why, as the Premier mentioned, we are very much focused on transformation, to ensure that we are creating opportunities for inmates to get better rehabilitation and reintegration. We are taking steps to hire more correc-

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

1110

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Royal Victoria hospital provides some of the best patient care in the province by some of the best, smartest, sharpest physicians, nurses and health practitioners in our province.

What came out yesterday was that the RVH announced that they now have to cut \$8 million, despite the fact that the Minister of Health says there are no cuts. The reality is, this is yet another example. It was announced yesterday that 30 full-time jobs, along with 24 jobs that were being advertised, are gone, for a total of 56 previous positions—gone, wiped out, in the service of health care.

Why does the Premier continue to cut health care to

make up for her waste and mismanagement?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment on the Royal Victoria hospital.

The base funding for that hospital has increased about 103% since 2003-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and our budget, as the Leader of the Opposition might know, has actually increased funding to hospitals: \$345 million, and overall, \$1 billion more for health care as a result of the budget that we just brought in.

We know how critical health care is to the people of Ontario. We also know that hospitals are a central part of that service to people in the province, which is why we continue year over year to increase funding to the hos-

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: The Liberals have said they're going to invest in health care. What we're seeing is a very different story.

In a conference call for elected officials, RVH debriefed the public servants of Simcoe county and said that, based on the new formula, RVH gets \$500,000 in new funding but has to cut \$8 million. It is unacceptable. Some 1,700 new patients last year: There are more patients, there is more health care need, and yet the hospital has to cut because of this government's mismanagement.

Why is this government not providing the Royal Victoria hospital with the tools to serve the growing population? Why are you cutting Royal Victoria hospital? Why are you cutting health care?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I'm so proud of this hospital. This is a brand new hospital, completed in 2013. It doubled the capacity of what the previous hospital delivered. We've incorporated a cancer care program which is among the best anywhere.

I'm so proud of the member for Barrie, who has been such a strong advocate for this hospital, which resulted in the recently announced new cardiac care program that will be opening at Royal Victoria hospital in the foreseeable future.

I'm so proud of the staff, including the administration. They have balanced their budget for the last seven years running.

There will be no service cuts, Mr. Speaker. We've more than doubled the funding for this hospital. We have more than doubled the capacity through this new hospital. This is a great news story. I don't know where the member is trying to go with this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The reason that everyone in Simcoe county is livid with these \$8-million cuts is because this government is saying that they're going to invest—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Okay, we'll go to warnings—all sides.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, when this government says they're investing in health care, they have no credibility, because we see examples like this. The reality is, they can point—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie is warned.

Mr. Patrick Brown: —to any page in the budget, but this is not what we're seeing on the front pages of newspapers across Ontario. The reality is, just look at Simcoe county: \$1 million that was just cut from the Simcoe county health unit. Georgian Bay General had \$5 million cut. They said there would be more services provided at RVH, and now they've cut RVH by \$8 million.

The government promises investments in long-term care, and now it came out today that they're cutting \$340,000 from long-term care in Simcoe county. The mayor of Barrie called this "downloading by stealth."

Mr. Speaker, when will this Premier stop pretending that she's investing in health care?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

The Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Apart from the 28 hospitals that they closed when they were last in government—I know the Leader of the Opposition tried to do this with Georgian Bay, where he began fear-mongering, suggesting that a decision had been made to close the obstetrics unit at that hospital. In fact, that was absolutely false. There were recommendations. More than 100 proposals were put forward to the hospital in December. Among them, there is a whole series of efficiencies and improvements that can be made. That was one. It's among 100 proposals.

It's the same with RVH, with Royal Victoria hospital, doing a great, fantastic job. He needs to stop fear-mongering. In fact, he needs to start championing the hard work of this hospital, the people who work there, the front-line health care workers and the positive outcomes that we're seeing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. I would hope that members know by now that testing my resolve is a bad mistake.

New question.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier believe in universal health care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes, Mr. Speaker. **The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? *Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Thank you.

Just to reinforce, we're on warnings. If you choose to ignore the Speaker, the Speaker won't ignore you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: She should show it. In 2014, the health minister wrote an editorial in the Globe and Mail. He said, "While we need drug coverage to see better performance in our health system, pharmacare also speaks to the Canadian values of fairness and equity."

nterjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry is warned.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: He wrote in the Toronto Star that pharmacare was "one of the most important steps we can take to rededicate ourselves to the principle of universal access to health care."

Does the Premier share the belief that what Ontario needs is universal access to drug coverage?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has been an advocate and a leading voice across this country on the need for a pharmacare system. He is working with his colleagues across the country. He has been a very articulate advocate for pharmacare.

We all understand that we need to provide for people and make sure that more people have access to the medications that they need, particularly as new medications come online and also as the population ages—

Interjection

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —which is why, in our budget, we moved to take 170,000 seniors and make sure that they did not have any deductible that they would have to pay. That is exactly consistent with the belief that pharmacare is an important thing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Actions do speak louder than words. The Premier sent a public message when she signed her name to a call for pharmacare, but now that the TV cameras are off and we see the real plan, instead of giving more access to affordable medication to seniors who are struggling, seniors will see the cost of their medications nearly double. That's the fact. It's extremely disappointing when Ontarians hear the Premier talking about more drug coverage, but what they get in their real lives from this Liberal government is less coverage.

Can the Premier explain why her ministers are talking about universal care—why she talks about universal

care—but what we see is the exact opposite? It's not just New Democrats saying that. It is CARP saying that; seniors' organizations are saying that. Everybody recognizes it. Ontario seniors will see the cost of their medication nearly double. Is that universal pharmacare?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've had this exchange in a number of ways, for a number of days. I will say once again that our objective was to take those 173,000 seniors, to make sure that they didn't have to pay a deductible, because they were the most vulnerable.

The second part of our initiative: There's a regulation out right now. We said if we didn't get that threshold right for people who are already paying a deductible and an increase on that deductible, we would look at it. I assume that groups like CARP and those organizations will be talking to us, will give us their input.

But the thrust of our initiative was to make sure that those 173,000 most vulnerable seniors will no longer have to pay a deductible, and that's exactly what will happen.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier: The reality is, their budget went in the opposite direction of universal pharmacare.

Speaker, there's nothing in this budget, either, for northern Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —and no recognition of the unique challenges facing northerners—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I already directed my question to the Premier. Perhaps you didn't hear me.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I trust the table, as well. Please direct.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Everything is more expensive in the north. People pay more for a litre of gas, for a carton of milk, for a dozen eggs. They pay more to heat their homes. And now a senior living on less than \$19,500 in northern Ontario is going to have to stretch every dollar even further. Does this Premier think that it is fair to nearly double the cost of medication for seniors in northern Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have answered this question. I have said that the regulation on that particular aspect of our initiative is in the public realm for consultation, and we have said that we will look at that.

Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party has said she is proud to vote against the budget that we just brought in. Let me just look at what that means. That means that this leader of the third party is proud to vote against transforming student assistance, which will mean free tuition for low-income families and more affordable tuition for middle-class families. She's proud to vote against taking action on climate change and investing cap-and-trade proceeds transparently into green projects

that reduce pollution. She's proud to vote against lowering hospital parking fees. She's proud to vote against improving services for children and youth with autism through a five-year \$330-million investment. She's proud to vote against all of those things.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very proud to vote against a budget that grows inequality in this province, worsens our health care system, worsens our education system, doesn't create enough jobs for the people of this province and turns its back on universal pharmacare.

It's really clear that this Premier either doesn't understand the north or she doesn't care about the north.

The CEO of the Thunder Bay hospital says that people in Thunder Bay will see health cuts because the province's funding formula doesn't make sense in the north. He said, "We've seen a reduction in our budget of half a million dollars last year on that formula. I think it overemphasizes population growth, so populations growing in southern Ontario tend to get more of that money than we do. That's a problem."

Why is the Premier ignoring the health care needs of the northern families in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Once again, Mr. Speaker, there seems to be a theme here. In fact, the theme might be a cardiac one, because just like I was talking about the new acute cardiac program that we're developing at Royal Victoria, we just announced recently, in the past months, a brand new cardiovascular surgery and vascular surgery program at Thunder Bay regional hospital. It's a single program; actually, in partnership with Toronto General Hospital—and I was there. I can't remember the number of times I've been to Thunder Bay regional hospital for announcements there, to meet with staff, front-line health care workers. There's incredible activity taking place the research that's going on there that we're supporting, as well. It's a world-class health care centre that we're developing in partnership with the leadership in Thunder Bay, including the health leadership that's there. I would hope that the third party would recognize what we're developing there, which is so badly needed but so well deserved.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: How out of touch this health minister is. The theme is the cuts to Ontario hospitals. That's what the theme is.

It's not just the Thunder Bay hospital. The Timmins hospital has been forced to cut \$35 million over the last three and a half years. The North Bay hospital CEO says, "This year has been challenging, and the next one is going to be even more so." And we know that nearly doubling drug costs is going to hit northern seniors as well, Speaker.

When will this Premier start listening to the needs of the north and making sure that northerners get fair access to the health care that they need?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton-Lawrence is warned.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I remain proud of the work that we're doing as a government in the north with our partners there throughout the health care system: the work that I referenced in Thunder Bay; the hospitals that we're renovating and building in the north as well; the fact that our 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics that exist around the province—many of those are in the north. In fact, the first was in Sudbury.

If we want to talk about trends here, let's talk about the trend of them when they were in government, where they closed hundreds of mental health beds—13% of the mental health beds across this province were closed—when they delisted home care from OHIP coverage, and when they fired 3,000 nurses when they were in power. For that short period of time, the devastating impact that they had, which we've been rebuilding—and we've been rebuilding after the devastation of the PC Party as well.

I'm proud of our investments, including 345 million new dollars for hospitals across the province, a more than 2% increase this year.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Premier. This government has a history of cozying up to special interest groups and Liberal friends. Last June, the Premier committed to bringing in new rules for third-party-funded advertising, yet nothing has changed despite her electoral reform bill passing.

The Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Essensa, has repeatedly called for limiting advertising by special interest groups during election periods, yet his calls have been ignored.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier do the honourable thing and do what she personally committed to doing, which is to bring in meaningful third-party advertising reform?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have been asked this question a number of times. I have said in the public realm that we are committed to not only bringing in changes in terms of third-party advertising, but also looking at political fundraising rules. We are doing that, Mr. Speaker. We will be bringing forth a plan. I look forward to support from the parties opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Premier, Speaker: The Liberals won't fix a system where "fairness is distorted." Those were the Toronto Star's words, not mine.

The Chief Electoral Officer noted that Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and the federal government have all adopted controls over third-party advertising. As a matter of fact, Ontario remains the only

place where third parties do not face advertising spending or contribution limits. It's time we level the playing field; it's time for action.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier take a break from her backroom meetings and take actual action to bring in real fairness and real reform to our system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we agree; we agree that there need to be changes. But I would just remind the member opposite that we actually are the party that has brought in changes. In 2007, third-party advertising rules—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There were no rules before 2007. There were no rules at all, Mr. Speaker. We brought in rules in 2007.

I have committed to bringing in further enhancements. We will do that, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon is warned. I had a lot of choice.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In addition to changes on third-party advertising, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at political fundraising and we'll be bringing in a plan as well for that.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Some 124 workers from the Rideau Carleton Raceway are here with us today in the gallery. They're members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. They've been locked out of work by the OLG, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., since just before Christmas, all because they rightly refused to have their decent pensions gutted from their collective agreements.

This government has been promising a secure income retirement through its ORPP for all Ontarians, while at the same time turning a blind eye to the OLG making cuts to their workers' superior pension plans. This is the height of hypocrisy.

Will the minister explain—

Interjections.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Finish, please.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Will the minister explain why his Liberal government will allow the OLG to treat these workers and their families this way?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the concerns of the individuals who have travelled here today overnight. It's a very difficult situation for them and their families. They are here in the gallery today, as mentioned, and I want them to know that I value their work and I think all of us in this House respect their rights.

We want everyone to be at their best. This ongoing labour disruption at the slots at Rideau is not easy for anyone. I also respect the collective bargaining process that's under way and that mediators are involved. OLG says—and I believe they've had this discussion now—it is willing to go back to the bargaining table, and I remain hopeful that this matter will be resolved as soon as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Well, that's interesting, because certainly the workers haven't heard that.

Let's be clear: The OLG is a crown corporation. It takes its marching orders from the government. We have these workers and their families here with us today. They have been out of work since before Christmas. They are without a job, they are without a paycheque, and the OLG has even cut their health benefits. We have workers here that need medications just to function every day, and they have not had any health benefits since the lockout—all of this under the Liberal government's watch.

Will the minister tell these 124 workers and their families who are here today why the Liberal government has done nothing to get the crown corporation back to the table and nothing to get these workers back to work?

Interjections

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: It's disappointing that the member opposite, from the NDP no less, is suggesting that we negotiate outside of the collective bargaining process. They themselves know fully well that that's the way it should occur. We respect that every employee should be treated fairly and respectfully, and it's appropriate not to negotiate now outside of the process.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I can confirm this: that in fact the issues in dispute are around wages and pensions. I recognize that. I also recognize that the OLG and others have made a number of proposals already that have been consistent with 17 others that they've ratified with the OPS, including the security services by OPSEU at the Rideau Carleton just last November. The conciliator by the Ministry of Labour has been placed. They have called a meeting as of last January. It's unfortunate that they didn't come to an agreement.

I am very hopeful, though, that they will get back to the bargaining table, where they should, to get this resolved. We recognize that that's important.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New—*Interjection.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'd better not look at me.

Member from Kingston and the Islands.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question today is for the Associate Minister of Finance. Minister, I'm pleased that our government has consistently been in favour of enhan-

cing retirement security. I know that residents in my riding of Kingston and the Islands are pleased to see our government taking a leadership role on this issue.

Many people I have spoken to are concerned about their future and they recognize that too many Ontarians are not saving enough for retirement. The world of work is changing and a growing number of young workers no longer have access to a workplace pension plan.

I know the minister has made a lot of progress on the development and implementation of this important plan over the past several months. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please highlight some of the ways that the government is helping people with retirement security through the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the very hardworking member from Kingston and the Islands for that question.

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in our commitment to build a strong and secure retirement income system for the people of Ontario. Our goal is for all Ontario employees to be part of the ORPP or a comparable plan by 2020.

Study after study, including ones from Canada's major financial institutions like CIBC, RBC, BMO and Sun Life, has told us that many Canadians are not saving for retirement. The ORPP will address this challenge by ensuring that Ontario workers receive a predictable stream of income, indexed to inflation and paid for life. This means that future retirees will have more disposable income to spend in their neighbourhoods, supporting local businesses in their communities. The Conference Board of Canada was also clear that, accounting for all factors, consumers and the economy as a whole are better off under the ORPP.

We're showing leadership on this issue because we believe that after a lifetime of working, Ontarians deserve a dignified retirement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for her response. I have heard some people refer to the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan incorrectly as a tax, or as a payroll tax. Some of these individuals who have used the term "tax" are sitting across the aisle with us today.

I've heard the minister tell the House that the ORPP is being designed to mirror the CPP. According to CARP, "The CPP is not run by the government and it's not a tax. Your CPP is an earned pension. CPP Investment Board (CPPIB) manages the CPP at arm's length from all levels of government and makes independent investment decisions."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please discuss this issue and further explain how a pension plan is different from a tax?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: As the member suggested, there have been a number of individuals who incorrectly call pension plans a tax. In fact, it has been a common phrase used by members of the PC Party, both inside and outside this House. This is misleading. This is why I was pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition flip-flop on his

position on this issue. On Monday, while defending yet another PC flip-flop, the leader clearly stated, "It's not a tax if government doesn't keep it. It's not a tax if you give it back."

We have been clear through legislation that all funds that are collected by the ORPP Administration Corp. will be held in trust for members. Similar to CPP, the ORPP will be administered at arm's length from government. I hope the leader shared his new talking points with the members of his caucus so that they, too, are clear that pension plans are not a tax.

The ORPP would mean all Ontarians would have access to a secure retirement, not just ones fortunate enough to have—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Premier: In 2012, her government embarked on a gaming modernization plan that cancelled the slots-at-the-racetrack program and attempted to expand casinos across Ontario, causing the deaths of thousands of horses and the loss of thousands of rural jobs.

In Ottawa, the Rideau Carleton Raceway was threatened with a downtown Ottawa casino. Only after major public backlash did the Liberals abandon that plan, or so I thought. Now over 100 slot workers at the RCR, who are underpaid compared to their counterparts across Ontario, are forced, literally, out into the Ottawa cold, locked out by the OLG. During the first weeks of this lockout, revenues from the slots at the Rideau Carleton were down \$1 million from the same quarter a year ago.

Is this a plan to starve the Rideau Carleton Raceway of its patrons so this government can finally build a downtown Ottawa casino, with the slots and the horse—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I don't think anybody in this House enjoys when they see a strike or a lockout. Ontario has got an excellent record in reaching settlements in this regard. Over 98% of agreements are reached around the collective bargaining. What we concentrate on is working with the parties to focus on a settlement that's going to result in a fair collective agreement. That's what we want to see in this circumstance. That's what we're working for at the Ministry of Labour. Nothing would please me more, and I'm sure nothing would please all members of this House more, than to see that agreement reached.

The way that agreement is reached is to bring people back to the table. I'm pleased to inform—I think I can expand a little bit more in the supplementary—that I'm actively engaged with the mediator in this regard. He's reaching out to the parties as I speak.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm going back to the Premier, because the motive of what they're doing is to close

down the Rideau Carleton Raceway and put these people out of a job and put the rest of those horse people out of a job so they can bring down a downtown Ottawa casino.

First, the government attacked the rural roots of the people of Nepean–Carleton at a half-century-old race-track by eliminating their revenue-sharing agreement. Now the government is forcing these folks here today—its underpaid employees—out of work, and it has cost the OLG \$1 million. The OLG is the only gaming corporation in the entire world that goes out of its way to lose money. They are biting off their nose to spite their face.

I question the Premier again, and I would like a response for my constituents: Will the government recognize that it's being unfair to its employees, or will the government continue to force out the Rideau Carleton Raceway and share their secret plan for an Ottawa—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. 1140

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I'm not sure it's particularly helpful in this regard to try to solve the collective agreement in this House.

Each of the parties has a record. We know which party was the one that was trying to get rid of public service jobs during the last election. That was very clear.

We're at a point right now where we have a group that is locked out and we have two parties that aren't at the table. The role of the Ministry of Labour—and, I would think, the hope of everybody in this House—is that both sides will agree to return to that table to do the hard work, to make the tough choices that result in collective agreements that, at the end of it all, ensure that people have good, long-lasting, stable employment in the province of Ontario.

I don't think there's any sense in throwing stones about the motives behind this—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Clearly, Speaker, what we all should aspire to is to get these two parties back to the table, to ensure that they complete an agreement the way we have in 98% of the cases.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Minister, this week is the annual prospectors' and developers' conference. Your ministry hosted a number of industry receptions with companies working in the province.

Last week, a report was released which states that Ontario is lagging on exploration permits. It went on to say that a quarter of industry respondents believed that permit approval times had lengthened considerably in Ontario in the last 10 years. On the level of transparency in the approvals process—again, no surprise—Ontario's transparency ranks amongst the worst.

We are losing investment, we are losing companies and we are losing jobs with every passing minute. So my question to the minister is, why on earth is your government making the permit processing even longer and more frustrating?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It was a tremendous week at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference and a very positive one in terms of the meetings that we had not just with companies but with indigenous leadership and the federal government.

As we move forward with our mineral development strategy, our goal is to remain the leader in sustainable mineral development all across the world. Certainly, in Ontario we are very proud of the fact that we are still number one in mineral exploration and mineral production. That's incredibly important to us.

In terms of your specific question, we are working as closely as we can, to be as open as we can, to move the plans and permits process forward, and we'll continue to do that in the best fashion that we can, working closely with industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Minister, the industry reported that the province was slow and far behind other provinces with synchronizing permitting and industry milestones.

The criticisms have been abundant. The AG's report found that the government has spent \$13 million and has nothing to show for it. Cliffs said they had zero hope and that every investment made here was a disaster. Sources inside Noront indicate that they have threatened to suspend work. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce also reported a lack of investment in the Ring of Fire. First Nations leadership have publicly expressed concern that the provincial government is violating their agreement.

"Inclusion, investment, infrastructure—truth and reconciliation is the path forward." These were wise words, at the PDAC opening ceremony, from Regional Chief Day.

Minister, this is no longer a game of crying wolf. When will you show leadership with this file?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, again, we had an extraordinary relationship-building exercise with the Ring of Fire development; there's no doubt about it. The work that we're doing with the Matawa First Nations is unprecedented. The fact that we signed a regional framework agreement is unprecedented.

The work that we're doing, moving forward, is going to position us so that we are ready to move forward. The work we're doing with industry, whether it's with Noront Resources or any of the other companies that are related to investment in the Ring of Fire, is absolutely moving forward in a positive way.

You can be as negative as you want to be. We're going to continue to work positively with all of our partners and stakeholders, including the industry, including First Nations, including the Métis Nation, and we are going to recognize that we can be the top mineral destination for mining around the world. That's our goal in moving forward with the Ring of Fire as well: a project that, when it comes to fruition, is going to be a huge economic benefit to so many people across the province of Ontario.

ONTARIO FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. I've always been passionate about the television, film and broadcasting industries. In fact, before getting into politics, I worked as a reporter, producer and anchor for several stations, including the CBC, CTV, TVO and OMNI, and worked on several documentary films.

As a former board member for the Reelworld Film Festival, I've seen first-hand how good storytelling and filmmaking can move us to action. TIFF, Reelworld and even the Milton Film Festival in my riding are just some of the wonderful festivals that provide Ontario filmmakers with a platform for their work. We have some amazing talent.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport tell the House how our government is encouraging the development of our rapidly growing television and film sector?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the MPP from Halton for her continued work and advocacy for our creative sector here in the province of Ontario. There's no question that this government is a proud supporter of the creative sector here in Ontario.

Yesterday we made some changes in the Interactive Digital Media Fund, and today we shared some great news with the sector. Ontario has had a great year. Ontario played a huge role at the Oscars, winning best picture for a film that was filmed here in Ontario. Of course, best actress went to an actress from the movie Room, which was co-produced here in the province of Ontario.

We know that there are TV productions that take place here, like Murdoch Mysteries, Suits, and Reign, and we'll continue to support our film and television sector through our budget to ensure that it continues to build on that sector here in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, TV and film-

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, Minister, for your hard work in this sector. In fact, I saw the films Spotlight and Room, and I was proud to discover that they were filmed right here in our province.

We know that the number one priority of our government is to grow the economy and create jobs for Ontarians, and we know that the film and television sectors are important and thriving industries in Ontario.

I'm pleased to hear from the minister that our budget and our continued investment in TV and film is leading to record-breaking GDP and job numbers. I'm proud our government is supporting this vital sector and the talented producers, directors, actors, cinematographers and industry experts living and working in our province.

Can the minister tell the members of this House more about our support for this important sector?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I was happy to announce today that TV and film tax credits attracted a record-breaking level of production in 2015, making it the best year for film and television in the history of this province.

The TV and film sector here in the province contributed over \$1.5 billion to our local economy, generating 4,500 new jobs here in Ontario. I know that we'll have continued growth here with continued support by the government. That means more local jobs, more economic growth and increased economic foreign investment.

For every actor in front of the camera, Mr. Speaker, there are a dozen carpenters, lighting technicians, sound, special effects, post-production—there are so many people involved in production, and we're proud as a government to support film and television here in the province of Ontario.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Attorney General. Two years ago, I introduced a private member's resolution to reform joint and several liability for municipalities. My motion received unanimous consent from MPPs of all parties—even Liberals—yet here we stand over two years later and the government has done absolutely nothing.

Municipalities' insurance premiums remain high. In fact, it was brought up again at last month's ROMA/OGRA conference. So I ask the minister: Why won't the government respect the will of municipalities across Ontario and respect the resolution passed in this House by all parties over two years ago?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: To say that we have done nothing is not exactly correct, because there has been a lot of review that has been done. You know—

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Not exactly correct." You've done a little wee bit?

1150

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know the member might want to withdraw that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: There has been a lot of consultation that was done. You know what, Mr. Speaker? There was no support except from the insurance company and some of the municipalities.

So the legal organizations, those who represent those individuals who have been injured or who have a disability resulting from one of these injuries, were very much against any change in joint and several liability.

I will continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, the Liberals have turned their backs on municipalities. What a disgrace!

But if the minister won't help municipalities across the province, what about her own constituents? In 2008, there was a tragic incident in Ottawa where a drunk driver slammed into a bus. Because the bus driver was driving six kilometres over the speed limit and because he apparently picked the wrong moment to check his mirrors, the bus driver was found partially at fault. Now, Ottawa taxpayers are on the hook for \$2 million. This case represents municipalities' worst fears.

Here's my question: If other provinces and states can make sensible reforms to their system, what's stopping Ontario? Is it because the Liberals' so-called consultation sought input only from trial lawyers? Is it because they

totally excluded insurers and municipalities?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: As I said, Mr. Speaker, there was a wide consultation. The review of the consultation shows us that—what the opposition wants to do is to switch the burden from the municipality to the injured individual. On this side of the House, we don't agree with that.

So unless there is a suggestion that will not do that—I'm open to look at other proposals. But, so far, the proposal that came to us was to do exactly that: to shift the burden of the municipality to the injured individual. We're not ready to do that, and we're not going to do that.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais poser ma question à

la première ministre.

Today marks two weeks since the Nishnawbe Aski Nation of Sioux Lookout and the Chiefs Committee on Health declared a health emergency for First Nations in Sioux Lookout and across the NAN territory. As Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler said, "Children are dying and lives are at risk."

Communities are in a state of crisis. Many First Nations lack the basics needed to deliver proper health care. As the declaration of emergency states, "People continually encounter the effects of federal and provincial jurisdictional squabbling leading to inequitable access to health care."

Chiefs are calling on all levels of government—and that includes this provincial government—to commit to immediate action to address this urgent crisis.

It has been two long weeks, Speaker. What has the Premier done to address the urgent health care crisis in the NAN territory?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question, Mr. Speaker.

It is true that the NAN in the Sioux Lookout region issued this public health emergency statement. I think it was one day after—it might have even been the same day, Mr. Speaker—that I organized the conference call with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and with Regional Chief Isadore Day. In fact, there were quite a number of chiefs who were represented on the conference call with myself because I wanted, on a very urgent basis, to begin to address the valid concerns that they have raised through their call for support and help in health care.

They also emphasized the importance—which we, of course, agree with—of working closely with our federal partners; that all levels of government—our First Nations, the provincial government and the federal government—work together in a collaborative fashion to address the issues concerning public health and other health issues in an effective manner.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: An urgent health care crisis demands more than a phone call. The community in northwestern Ontario and across the NAN territories has suffered from inadequate health care access for decades, and the chiefs are clear: They don't want this to continue any longer. They are calling for immediate action by the government of Ontario, not phone calls. They want them to approve the long-term-care facility in Sioux Lookout. They want us—the government, you—to increase resources to support mental health and prevent suicide, and they want the government to comply with Jordan's Principle and make sure that children, in particular, have access to health care.

For too long, governments at all levels, including the provincial government, have failed to address the crisis in First Nations communities. These failures need to stop right now. Will the Premier take immediate action, not calls, to stop this First Nations crisis?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, that immediate response and the conference call came one day after I addressed the annual health summit of our First Nations leadership and front-line health care workers, where I outlined our plan, going forward, to work with them. I had hoped—in fact, I'm surprised that it took her two weeks, and she hasn't done this privately with me either, to actually address this either publicly or privately, as it's such an important issue.

We're developing an action plan in response to every single issue that's referenced in their press release. It was informed further by that urgent and important phone call. We've committed to creating a process and an in-person meeting that will include federal Minister Jane Philpott. We're developing an action plan, but we're doing that in collaboration with our First Nations partners.

If she's unsure of the government's commitment to this, I suggest that she talk to the same First Nations leaders that I have, and I believe they will defend our resolve.

SENIORS

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors affairs. Ontario is currently home to approximately two million people over the age of 65, and over the next 25 years that number will more than double. As our minister knows, seniors play an active and important role in our province's communities and our economy. Recently, in the budget, this government proposed changes that will benefit seniors and assist them in living healthy and happy lives in their retirement years.

My question, through Mr. Speaker to the minister: Would this minister inform us in the House on recent items announced for seniors in the 1916 budget?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering.

I have to say that he is absolutely right. Last week, in 18-degree weather, the member was there, shivering, but doing his job representing the seniors, the people of Ajax–Pickering, and I have to congratulate him, because they were just groundbreaking another seniors building. I know what he's talking about, Speaker, and it's absolutely right.

Indeed, the 2016-17 budget ensures that our seniors have access to programs and services they need, such as—and this is important—\$250 million in home care and community care, an additional \$75 million over the next three years in community-based residential hospice and palliative care, and an additional \$10 million annually in support of our residents, helping them with dementia and other complex behavioural and neurological conditions.

Speaker, above all, 130,000 seniors will benefit when they go to visit, or they go to the hospital, from the 50% reduction in hospital parking. This is what we do—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Dickson: Mr. Speaker, perhaps at this time I should correct my year of record. Whatever I said, it was of course 2016. I'm like Panasonic: slightly ahead of my time

I'd like to thank the minister for his response. I know that our government has a plan to create jobs and grow the economy, and we recognize that our greatest strength is our people. I'm pleased that we've allocated funding in the budget to ensure that our seniors have access to the programs and services they need, and I look forward to seeing so many citizens across this province and in my riding of Ajax—Pickering benefit from the 2016 budget. It's important that seniors remain healthy and independent for as long as possible, and feel safe and supported.

Question: Can the minister responsible for seniors' affairs please explain what is being proposed for the shingles vaccine?

1200

Hon. Mario Sergio: The member is right again: Our seniors want to live an engaged, active, and independent life as long as possible. The member is absolutely right again when he says that we want to create jobs. And

what's in the budget? Some \$160 billion to create 110,000 jobs—I think that's very important.

I have to say, Speaker—let me try and say this in a very nice way—that since the beginning, our Premier has been preaching with more fervour than an evangelical preacher about jobs and the economy. This is nothing new. But there is more in the budget. I have been after the Minister of Health, the Premier and the Minister of Finance to include the shingles vaccine for our seniors—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: People in Chatham-Kent and around the province are outraged that there is an application before the court, to be heard tomorrow, to euthanize 21 dogs seized in a dog fighting operation in Tilbury. This has sparked an outpouring of support for the dogs and outrage towards the province.

The dogs rescued from Michael Vick's high-profile 2007 fighting ring have proven to the world that fighting dogs can be successfully rehabilitated. A Rhode Island woman who owns one of those 22 dogs saved from Michael Vick's estate, and who also runs a rescue for fighting dogs, has offered to lend her expertise to the province—free of charge—but has heard no response.

Why does the province think these dogs are different?

Why don't they deserve a second chance?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The member is asking about a court process that is under way involving the OSPCA. We understand this is a very challenging issue, and many individuals and organizations are concerned. I'm sure the member knows that there is currently an application to the court by the OSPCA for permission to euthanize 21 of the 31 pit bull dogs seized from an alleged dog-fighting operation, citing risk for public safety. However, the remaining dogs are being rehabilitated for relocation outside the province.

Our government takes the care and protection of animals in Ontario very seriously, and we are proud to have high standards. But we have to be mindful that the OSPCA is an independent, charitable organization that provides a number of services, such as animal shelters, veterinary care and spay/neuter clinics. Contrary to public reports, the government of Ontario does not have legislative or regulatory authority to direct the OSPCA to take or not to take any action in this instance. This is a matter before the courts, and that's where it should be dealt with.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister: I own a rescue dog and I love him very dearly. Ontario's archaic animal laws are making this issue more complicated. The animal sanctuary Dog Tales has offered to help, begging the minister to grant a special designation so they can take these dogs in. They have taken dogs in that the province has deemed unadoptable before and they are willing

to do it again. They have even offered a forever home for any dogs that cannot be rehabilitated.

No stone should be left unturned. So, Speaker, to the minister: Will the minister take every possible step to save these dogs' lives and grant such a designation? Minister, save the dogs.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I also have a rescue dog, which my family and I love very, very dearly. As I said earlier, the OSPCA is an independent, charitable organization that provides a number of services when it comes to the welfare of animals in our province. Additionally, the OSPCA Act, which is legislation of this Parliament, authorizes the OSPCA inspectors and agents to enforce any law pertaining to the welfare of animals. Police may also enforce these laws. As I said earlier, and I want to repeat, the government of Ontario does not have legislative or regulatory authority to direct the OSPCA to take—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville can turn his chair away from me after he hits, but it doesn't mean I don't hear you. We're very close to a vote, and I would love for him to be able to exercise that voting right.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, Speaker, the government does not have any authority to tell the OSPCA what to do or what not to do, or to exempt a private facility from the requirements of the Dog Owners' Liability Act for the purposes of transferring ownership of the dogs to such a facility.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Scarborough–Agincourt on a point of order.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to welcome two American guests visiting the Legislature. Former Minnesota senator Jane Krentz and NCEL executive director Jeff Mauk are visiting Queen's Park today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to introduce to the Legislature today two residents from the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, Wayne and Jennifer Black. Welcome to Queen's Park.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for allocation of time on Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1206 to 1211.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats?

On Tuesday, March 8, 2016, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 63. Mr. Clark then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

"That the paragraph beginning"-

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense.

We are now dealing with Mr. Clark's amendment to the motion. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted Bailey, Robert Barrett, Toby Brown, Patrick Clark, Steve Coe, Lorne Hillier, Randy Hudak, Tim Jones, Sylvia MacLaren, Jack MacLeod, Lisa Martow, Gila McDonell, Jim McNaughton, Monte Miller, Norm

Munro, Julia

Nicholls, Rick Pettapiece, Randy Scott, Laurie Smith, Todd Thompson, Lisa M. Walker, Bill Wilson, Jim Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Navs

Albanese, Laura Anderson, Granville Baker, Yvan Balkissoon, Bas Ballard, Chris Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bisson, Gilles Bradley, James J Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe DiNovo, Cheri Dong, Han Duguid, Brad Fife, Catherine Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Forster, Cindy Fraser, John French, Jennifer K. Gates, Wayne Gélinas, France Gravelle, Michael Hatfield, Percy Hoggarth, Ann Hoskins, Eric Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France MacCharles, Tracy Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Mantha, Michael Martins, Cristina Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McGarry, Kathryn McMahon, Eleanor McMeekin, Ted

Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z. Miller, Paul Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sattler, Peggy Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Tabuns, Peter Takhar, Harinder S. Vanthof, John Vernile, Daiene Wong, Soo Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 24; the nays are 67.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment lost.

Are the members ready to vote on the main motion?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 63. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1215 to 1216.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura Anderson, Granville Baker, Yvan Balkissoon, Bas Ballard, Chris Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bradley, James J. Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Dong, Han

Duguid, Brad Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fraser, John Gravelle, Michael Hoggarth, Ann Hoskins, Eric Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France MacCharles, Tracy Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Martins, Cristina Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McGarry, Kathryn McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Nagvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Takhar, Harinder S. Vernile, Daiene Wong, Soo Wynne, Kathleen O. Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted Bailey, Robert Barrett, Toby Bisson, Gilles Brown, Patrick Clark, Steve Coe, Lorne DiNovo, Cheri Fife, Catherine Forster, Cindy French, Jennifer K. Gates, Wayne Gélinas, France

Hatfield, Percy Hillier, Randy Hudak, Tim Jones, Sylvia MacLaren, Jack MacLeod, Lisa Mantha, Michael Martow, Gila McDonell, Jim McNaughton, Monte Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Munro, Julia Nicholls, Rick Pettapiece, Randy Sattler, Peggy Scott, Laurie Smith, Todd Tabuns, Peter Thompson, Lisa M. Vanthof, John Walker, Bill Wilson, Jim Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 37.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to remind all members that there's an event this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. in rooms 228 and 230, when we will be rededicating those rooms as a gathering place. Aboriginal theme rooms are here in the Legislative Building. I hope that you will be able to join me as part of the legislative change. Our First Nations people will be here. There will be a ceremony providing attention to First Nations people.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1220 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NIPISSING SERENITY HOSPICE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This Friday, I'm looking forward to attending the official campaign launch that is being held for a very important project in my riding of Nipissing: the Nipissing Serenity Hospice. I want to congratulate all of the hard-working volunteers, led by Mathilde Bazinet and Jim Marmino, in moving this

much-needed initiative forward. The construction of our residential hospice will create 50 jobs during construction and 15 full-time and 10 part-time jobs when operational.

Support for these hospices right across the province is vital. The community had put forth petitions, which I supported by reading them into the record in this Legislature. And now the official fundraising starts. Speaker, it's a long road, but nowhere near as difficult a path as the one those who need this hospice will face.

Hospices provide a much-needed place dedicated to providing quality end-of-life care and allowing people to die with dignity.

The Nipissing Serenity Hospice will be a much-valued addition to our community.

I thank you for allowing me this opportunity, Speaker.

SPEAKER'S BOOK AWARD

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be a little bit unorthodox and actually thank you for having started up the book award that we have now, for the fourth year, here in the province of Ontario.

I'm especially pleased that a friend of mine, Edmund Metatawabin—not because we pulled any strings, but because he's a great author—along with his co-writer, wrote a book called Up Ghost River, which is the story of Edmund and many other people living on the James Bay when it comes to the experience of living out on the land, the experience of what the land means to First Nations, and also what the experience of residential schools has done to members of First Nations across the area. It is a very compelling book; it's a very disturbing book at times, but certainly one that is very much worth reading. I can say that I was no prouder than this Monday night, when you pulled out that envelope, as they do at the awards ceremonies during the Emmys or the Oscars, and you said, "The winner is...." For some reason, I kind of knew that Edmund was going to win because I'd seen his book, I've known Edmund for a long time, and I know what he has written is a very powerful account of his experiences and the stories of the James Bay.

On behalf of all of us here in the Legislature, and on behalf of all our constituents across this province, we want to thank you for putting on this award, Speaker. But I really want to congratulate Edmund Metatawabin for being this year's winner of your book award. It's very well deserved, and I think a lot of people back home are proud to see that Edmund won it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A fabulous book, indeed.

DANCING DAMSELS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and speak about an organization doing great work: the Dancing Damsels. This non-profit group is made up entirely of volunteers who are dedicated to promoting the arts and the empowerment of women.

Recently, they held a wonderful event to celebrate International Women's Day. The group honoured more than a dozen women for their achievements. Of the 14 award recipients, I was honoured to be chosen as one of the women achievers. Several women were recognized—

Interjection: Congratulations.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you—for their contribution to areas like the arts, engineering and social services.

But the real star of the show was one particular recipient: the one and only Hurricane Hazel McCallion. Hazel was honoured for her 36 years as mayor of Mississauga. She holds the record as Ontario's longest-serving mayor, a title she now shares with Milton's mayor, Gordon Krantz; she established the GTA mayors' committee; she created Hazel's Hope, a campaign to help children with AIDS and HIV in southern Africa; and her list of accomplishments goes on. It was inspiring to listen to Mayor McCallion speak and see the way the crowd responded to her.

As we mark International Women's Day this week, it has been my pleasure to take part in several events celebrating women's achievements, including the Social Services Network in York region, where we honoured important women in the local South Asian community.

It makes me proud to be surrounded by such respected women and I want to thank groups like Dancing Damsels and the Social Services Network for promoting women's empowerment.

POLICE SERVICES HERO OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Every day thousands of Ontarians rely on professional police officers, 911 dispatchers and other police service personnel to keep their families and community safe. The Police Association of Ontario's first-ever Police Services Hero of the Year Award looks to honour those who make a difference in their communities.

Constable Debbie Lafreniere from Chatham-Kent Police has been nominated for her work with a young boy who has been faced with challenges from autism and who also lost his father to suicide. She meets regularly with Devon and deputizes him to help in the fight against bullying while promoting safety.

Devon says this: "She chases criminals and puts them in jail. She makes me feel safe and happy. She answers my questions and sometimes turns on the cruiser lights for me. She tells me I have to wear a seat belt to stay safe." He adds, "She took the picture of us by the cruiser. I put it on my police station at school. She shares with me. I want to be a police officer and be her partner. We will catch criminals and help people be safe."

Thank you, Constable Lafreniere, for being a hero but, more importantly, for being a friend and a mentor to young Devon.

Nominees must be one of the following: a sworn police officer, a 911 dispatcher or any other employee of

a municipal police service. To be eligible for the award, nominations must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on March 14.

In closing, to nominate your hero, go to the website policehero.ca and be sure to read the stories of the heroes that walk among us.

CANADIAN MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Mr. Wayne Gates: I would like to rise today and talk about one of the most important projects in the province of Ontario today, the Canadian Motor Speedway in Fort Erie. This is a project that is going to bring half a billion dollars of investment into our community and create good-paying and stable jobs for the people of my riding.

The talented Canadian Motor Speedway team and their executive director, Azhar Mohammad, have been working tirelessly with elected officials from all levels of government over the last few years to eliminate barriers and get this project completed. I'm happy to say we're very close to achieving that goal.

This is a project that has partnered with Niagara College, Brock University, McMaster University and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and invested in research and design that will benefit the people of this province. It's working with the automotive industry to ensure that the bright young minds of our province have the funding to innovate for a greener, more successful future in this industry.

Simply put, this is a project that can help make Niagara the economic engine that drives the growth of this province and I'm proud to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the members in this House will stand with me and ensure that we get this project completed, which can create thousands of jobs for this riding and bring in millions of dollars of economic development year after year after year.

DANNY THE BARBER

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: In my riding of Cambridge last week, a local legend celebrated a personal milestone. Danny the Barber, local legend, philanthropist and generous community leader, turned 80.

Like many others who visited him in his shop on his birthday, I was warmly greeted with cake, a chance to donate to the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank and his ever-present political opinions.

Born Doné Katsorov in Macedonia in 1936, he immigrated to Canada in 1956. In 1958, he opened his first barbershop in Hamilton, and he moved to the Cambridge area in 1980. Danny has been a fixture ever since.

Photographs cover the walls and ceiling of his shop and he has a story for each. He is fiercely patriotic, displaying a "Proud to Call Canada Home" sign in front of his famous barbershop window. Danny has made helping others a mantra, donating the proceeds from countless clip-a-thons to the Cambridge hospital, the Self-Help Food Bank and veterans, among others. He

helped establish the Cambridge's Grand River Film Festival and the Macedonian Club.

1510

Want an opinion about goings-on or who will win an election? The people in Cambridge ask Danny the Barber. He encourages people to vote, runs his own poll by keeping a record of his customers' voting intentions leading up to the election, and makes his sought-after predictions more accurately than the scientific pollsters.

Happy birthday, Danny. Thank you for your good deeds and your words, and here's to many more healthy years.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to highlight the devastating effects of this government's cuts to health care, and how it's impacting my community.

Prior to the release of the provincial budget, I asked the Minister of Health to restore funding to physicians' services after seeing three out of five labs shut down in Dufferin—Caledon and patients being forced to wait in the cold for service. The minister suggested that he was confused by my question and doesn't seem to realize the consequences of his actions.

On February 23, LifeLabs, which operates the two remaining blood labs in Dufferin county, released an open letter announcing their decision to close testing facilities in Thorold, London and Ottawa, in addition to consolidating 15 patient service centres and ending nine arrangements for local medical office collection, as well as reducing hours of operation in 53 patient service centres.

While it remains unclear if the labs in Orangeville and Shelburne will be impacted, there is no doubt that my constituents now have fewer options and longer wait times when it comes to lab services.

In the letter, the president and CEO stated that the decision was made in part because of "a series of government funding reductions in Ontario." The minister refuses to admit there is a direct connection between his cuts and lab closures across Ontario.

As a result of this latest announcement, I urge the minister to restore funding to health services so patients across Ontario can receive the essential services they rely on. Care, not cuts.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Mr. Han Dong: I'm delighted to rise today to recognize the interactive digital media companies in my riding of Trinity–Spadina.

Yesterday, I was joined by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport at marblemedia in Liberty Village to announce an increase of \$6 million to the Interactive Digital Media Fund. I'm proud to say many of these companies are in my riding.

The Interactive Digital Media Fund will help companies develop innovative projects like video games,

mobile apps and online magazines. For instance, I spoke to Mr. Mark Bishop, a partner of Distribution360, who said that this fund will help his business to grow and create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, province-wide interactive digital media productions support approximately 17,000 jobs and contribute over \$1 billion in revenue annually. It is important that we recognize their contribution and support them for our economic future. Interactive digital media are becoming more and more important in people's everyday lives. Ontario's support to this sector demonstrates our commitment to build an internationally competitive Ontario.

Congratulations to all the interactive digital media companies in Trinity-Spadina.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Daiene Vernile: On Monday, I had the opportunity, along with my colleague the MPP for Cambridge, to visit Forest Heights Collegiate Institute in Kitchener to meet with students, teachers and school administrators to share with them goods news regarding our modernization of the Ontario Student Assistance Program, or OSAP.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we're launching the new Ontario Student Grant program. For the first time ever, students from low-income families earning less than \$50,000 a year are no longer going to have to pay for tuition. This is a game changer in my community, where we have two universities and a college, and for all Ontarians. It means that students who wouldn't even bother applying to college or university because of the costs now have a chance at higher education. Students in families earning less than \$83,000 will now qualify for the grants.

One of the young people at our event on Monday was 18-year-old Amanda Hicks. She has just been accepted to Ryerson in Toronto to study psychology. Amanda first heard about free tuition from her mother on Facebook, and she thought it was a joke until she looked into it and learned more about the announcement in our budget. She said, "It changes my whole planning for my future. I'm not going to be struggling to pay for food and living.

"I can't tell you how happy I was to hear this."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that students like Amanda, regardless of their background or financial circumstances, should have a shot at a better future. This is helping to build Ontario up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

828117 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2016

Ms. McMahon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr40, An Act to revive 828117 Ontario Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Absolutely. It's about time we revived it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think that's a carry. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the price of electricity has skyrocketed under the Ontario Liberal government;

"Whereas ever-higher hydro bills are a huge concern for everyone in the province, especially seniors and others on fixed incomes, who can't afford to pay more;

"Whereas Ontario's businesses say high electricity costs are making them uncompetitive, and have contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs;

"Whereas the recent Auditor General's report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years if nothing changes;

"Whereas the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss, the debt retirement charge, the global adjustment and smart meters that haven't met their conservation targets have all put upward pressure on hydro bills;

"Whereas the sale of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and will likely only lead to even higher hydro bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To listen to Ontarians, reverse course on the Liberal government's current hydro policies and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills."

I support this petition as well and I have affixed my signature.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Catherine Fife: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on April 1, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit plan; "Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and a higher copayment each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy; and

"Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy

and maintain their independence; and

"Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medicines that they no longer can afford and put their health in jeopardy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the government plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Jordan.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas provincial demonstration schools in Ontario provide education programs and services for students with special education needs who require intensive supports due to severe learning disabilities; and 1520

"Whereas there are three demonstration schools in Ontario: Trillium in Milton, Sagonaska in Belleville and

Amethyst in London; and

"Whereas with specialized and targeted intervention and remediation provided by the provincial demonstration schools, children with severe learning disabilities have found success and are finally in an environment where they thrive and can learn in a meaningful way and access the education to which they are entitled; and

"Whereas these schools are in a consultation process that will most likely lead to closure while, even with early identification and early intervention, local school boards are ill-equipped to handle the needs of these

students;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"(a) to oppose this recommendation of demonstration school closures becoming part of the Ontario budget (which is strictly a cost-cutting measure which does not take into account the resulting high costs at school board level to provide same service types to severely learningdisabled students);

"(b) actively move to enable these valuable schools to remain in place to serve students who have exhausted all other available resources in order to access equal education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled by the law of the land, by opposing the closure of demonstration schools; and

"(c) actively move to enable the continuation of the added role of demonstration schools as front-runner pro-

viders of direction for technology use in schools, literacy development and curriculum delivery, by opposing the closure of demonstration schools."

I agree with this, Speaker. I will sign my name to it and give it to page Jessie.

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE EN FRANÇAIS

- M. Taras Natyshak: J'ai une pétition pour l'Université de l'Ontario français.
 - « À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :
- « Entendu que sur le 10 février le RÉFO, l'AFO et la FESFO ont présenté le rapport du Sommet provincial des États généraux sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français;
- « Entendu que le rapport a indiqué un besoin et un désir pour une université de langue française;
- « Entendu que le 26 mai, 2015 la députée France Gélinas a présenté un projet de loi pour créer cette université;
- « Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit : de commencer la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français dès que possible. »

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer et l'envoyer à la table des greffiers.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Andrew to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: J'ai une pétition ici qui dit :

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly"—that's us—"as follows:

"(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

"(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

"(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario."

I've signed that petition.

RAIL SERVICE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further petitions? The member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You weren't ready. At least the member for Dufferin—Caledon was ready.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "Whereas both the Canadian government and the Ontario government need a transportation policy, plan and investment that include transporting both passengers and freight by rail; and

"Whereas this is essential for our competitiveness in the world economy, for reducing carbon emissions and for socio-economic connectivity; and

"Whereas we must stop the abandonment of rail and support the safest, more efficient and least polluting mode of transportation: trains; and

"Whereas without rail as part of northern Ontario's transportation system, most of our communities are not sustainable;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario provide reliable, safe, all-season, accessible and affordable passenger train service throughout northern Ontario connected to Toronto and Ottawa."

I sign my name and give this to page Xavier. With my apologies; I thought I had it in my hand.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Apology accepted.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually"—substantially more, by the way—"and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I fully agree and send it down with page Luke.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has implemented a number of health care services cuts that impact patient care; and

"Whereas as a direct result of ministry cuts, the laboratory at the Highlands Health Network is closed as of January 1, 2016, this will drastically reduce services, affecting many patients who rely on the in-house laboratory for essential tests; and

"Whereas patient care is affected by the government's cuts including: \$54 million of the federal Canada Health Transfer from Ontario's health care budget, \$815 million from physician services, \$50 million from physiotherapy services for seniors and 50 medical residency positions across the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health as follows:

"Restore funding to the physicians, so that the Highlands Health Network can continue providing laboratory services for all its patients."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Tristan.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Daiene Vernile: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths ... lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung

Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this. I will sign my name to it and hand it to Owen.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition, sign it and give it to page Andrew.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province;

"Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

"Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment;

"Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and" our great province of Ontario.

It gives me great pleasure to sign it and give it to page Andrew.

DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas many residents and businesses in Ontario rely on the ability to drive a vehicle in order to work, buy food and otherwise function;

"Whereas licence suspension upon receipt of a medical notice to that effect is immediate; and

"Whereas constituents are forced to wait 30 business days following a positive medical review by their physician prior to being reinstated; and

"Whereas this wait time is not prescribed in any legislation or regulation, but is solely due to Ministry of Transportation policies that ignore the reality of living and operating a business, especially in rural and northern Ontario; and

"Whereas a needlessly long licence suspension threatens the livelihoods of many families in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Ministry of Transportation to institute a five-business-day service guarantee for drivers' licence reinstatements following the submission of a positive physician's review."

I agree with it and pass it off to Julia.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

JOBS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT LA CRÉATION D'EMPLOIS POUR AUJOURD'HUI ET DEMAIN (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 2, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes / Projet de loi 173, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 9, 2016, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved second reading of Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the navs have it. They were loud.

This will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

We have a deferral. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), this will be deferred till deferred votes on March 10, 2016.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. I'm particularly pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill because, over the last few years, environmental issues have gained new importance in my riding of Oxford. As I've explained to this House many, many times, a company has put forward a proposal to place a landfill site in a limestone quarry in Beachville. A lot of concerns have been raised about this site, but to me the biggest concern is the risk to our drinking water.

The proposal is to put the landfill close to the Thames River and not far from one of Ingersoll's main municipal water wells. That means that a leak from a landfill could contaminate our drinking water and possibly the entire river. As the mayor of Ingersoll often says, it's not a risk worth taking. Just last week, the mayor spoke to the Toronto public works and infrastructure committee to make it clear that our community is not willing to be a host for Toronto's or any other city's garbage. I want to commend him for his work on this issue.

I also want to take a minute to commend the many, many volunteers who have been working for years to fight this landfill proposal, doing research, writing letters, producing newsletters, fundraising and many more tasks. We've arranged that they can drop off letters at my office and I bring them to Queen's Park and get them to the minister.

Mr. Speaker, almost every week I bring hundreds of letters and postcards for the minister. Thousands and thousands of people have signed the petitions that I have presented in this Legislature.

This landfill proposal has led to a lot of discussion about how to protect our environment. I've heard ideas about how to promote recycling. I've heard proposals about incineration. I've heard discussions about what to do with old gravel pits. But, Mr. Speaker, in the hundreds of conversations, emails, letters and Facebook discussions, not one of my constituents has ever said that the best way to solve our environmental problems is to give the government billions more—and that's what this bill does.

Climate change is a serious challenge that requires a credible plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. Our leader made it clear on the weekend that we need to take action to stop climate change and protect our environment.

He also made it clear that we do not support the Liberals' tax grab, and that any plan must be revenue-neutral. That means that every dollar collected should go to the people and businesses of Ontario. The Liberal government intends to raise \$478 million from cap-and-trade in 2016-17, and by 2017-18 this government will increase cap-and-trade revenue to \$1.9 billion. That's the amount they wasted on the gas plant and eHealth. All those billions of dollars going to government revenues are simply a tax grab, and we do not—and will not—support another tax grab by this government. The people of Oxford just won't stand for it.

The government is requiring natural gas and petroleum industries to purchase all their emission allowances during the first period, which means that the people of Ontario will be hit with higher prices for gas and natural gas right away. The same goes for our businesses, which just told me, through my annual business survey, that they are already struggling with the cost of doing business in Ontario.

One of the businesses actually sent me a copy of an ad that he had received from New York state that talks about the fact that they have property and sales tax abatements, low-cost hydro power, 0% New York state manufacturing tax, employment incentives, and low-interest loan and grant programs. These are the jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, that we're competing with. The companies that have located there are the ones that our businesses are competing with, our companies who are already paying spiraling hydro costs, spending staff time on red tape and soon paying into a mandatory pension program. It is our businesses that are going to be paying for the government's billion-dollar tax grab. They're going to be sending that money to the government instead of creating jobs or investing in new environmental technology.

Mr. Speaker, in all the decisions about protecting the environment that we've had in Oxford, I've never had a request to increase the cost of gas by 4.3 cents a litre. When driving is a necessity, increasing the cost of gas doesn't change anyone's behaviour. It just takes more money out of their pocket, money that people can't afford after paying the increased cost of hydro, money that people can't afford after losing their job as more and more companies are leaving Ontario, money that people really won't be able to afford after the government's mandatory pension plan kicks in.

The people of Oxford know that in rural communities driving isn't a luxury and it isn't optional. People aren't driving for fun. They're driving to get to the doctor, to get to work, to buy groceries. There simply isn't another way to get there. We don't have subways or streetcars in Oxford; most people don't have access to a bus.

Residents in Oxford protect the environment in many different ways, Mr. Speaker. Many people live in the

country because they appreciate the land. Our farmers take care of the land and the soil every day, whether it's no-till or taking steps to reduce the amount of fertilizer. The grain farmers have established one million acres of self-sustaining pollinator habitat.

When I was on council in South-West Oxford, Mr. Speaker, we created the first mandatory recycling program in Ontario. We added a trailer behind the garbage truck and refused to pick up bags that contained items that should have been recycled. It was simple and it worked. It made a real change in people's behaviour, helped protect our environment and didn't create a billion-dollar slush fund for government.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't just the people of Oxford who are already doing their part. I recently had an opportunity to meet with many municipalities at ROMA. Many of them are already seeing the impacts of climate change on their infrastructure and are taking steps to reduce pollution.

1540

At ROMA, we also heard concerns that under this government's proposal, cogeneration projects like those in Ontario's greenhouses will be penalized. These are the environmental projects that this government helped to fund, and now those same projects will be penalized. It's hard to believe that this is the best environmental outcome.

If the government's real goal with this bill was to address climate change, they would have designed a program that was revenue-neutral rather than one that will take billons out of the pockets of Ontario families.

If the government's real goal was to protect the environment, they would have created this program with

independent oversight.

has had for them.

If their goal was to protect the environment, they would have more details on what steps farmers can take to sequester carbon and earn carbon credits.

Instead, they just have details on how much government will take from the people with this new tax.

Mr. Speaker, we believe in protecting our environment. I was part of a government that created the living legacy land use strategy, which added over 300 new parks and protected areas totalling 2.4 million hectares. We did it without causing significant pain to Ontario's taxpayers. That's a record to be proud of.

We aren't the only ones with a record, though. I was here to see when the Liberal government created the health care tax, at the time the single biggest tax hike in Ontario's history. We saw that money go into general revenues instead of health care. Since then, we've seen cuts to health care across Ontario by this government. We've seen hospital rooms closed. We've seen long wait-lists for services that people need. If you ask the people in my riding who had surgery postponed because they ran out of money in operating rooms until the new

If you ask any of the nurses who have been cut or the people in communities where the hospitals have been cut, they will tell you how effective that health tax has been.

fiscal year, they can tell you the effect that that health tax

It's clear that it is simply a tax grab, and they're trying to do it again.

Mr. Speaker, we've shown that you can protect the environment without causing significant pain to taxpayers. The government needs to go back to the drawing board and design a system that is truly about protecting the environment and addressing climate change, instead of a system that is really just about implementing a sneaky tax.

I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to speak. As we speak, we change Speakers and everything changes and it stays the same. I believe I started with you, Mr. Speaker, and you're back. With that, I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you to the member from Oxford.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm always pleased to listen to the member from Oxford. He brings a lot of knowledge and wisdom to this House. We affectionately know him as Uncle Ernie because, of course, he is related to our colleague the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

He raises some really valid points. There are a lot of unknowns here and a lot of uncertainties, and I think that breeds cynicism in the general public when it comes to this government in particular, and their track record of unveiling a whole host of projects and policies, and their failures along the way. We have to point to Ornge air ambulance. Unfortunately, we have to do this. We have to point to eHealth. We have to point to the cancellation of the gas plants. These are multi-billion-dollar boondoggles that, under the control, guidance and the stewardship of the Liberal government, have failed miserably.

To deal with an issue as consequential as climate change and policy that will really be transformative in our province, I think members of the opposition are well within their reason and their ability to question the legitimacy, the plan and the overall strategy. We have to do that.

That being said, Speaker, we'd like the government to ensure that they're not going to time-allocate this bill. In fact, we should be talking about it for as long as we possibly can because it is incredibly complex. It affects so many areas of our economy. It can work. That's why, as New Democrats, we support a cap-and-trade model. We know it can work if it's done right. We simply don't, at this very moment, trust the plan that the government has put forward because we've seen their track record of failures.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I've been listening to the debate on Bill 172, the climate change act, and I'm very pleased to weigh in on the discussion this afternoon and to share with you some lived experiences from my home riding of Kitchener Centre, just to illustrate how this is going to We're not waiting for cap-and-trade in my riding to fight climate change. We're actually already doing this. In fact, in 1983, we were the first jurisdiction in all of Canada to adopt the Blue Bin Program, and now you've got millions of people across Canada who are doing the same.

Let me tell you about this local company. They're called Sustainability CoLab. They're leading other regional businesses and groups in reducing their carbon footprint. You might ask, how exactly are they doing this? Well, you register your company or group with Sustainability CoLab and their staff will share their expertise, and then you get an energy audit. You can add better windows, doors, insulation, better lighting; maybe you're going to get a better HVAC and so on.

We know that all of these items can be very costly to a small business when they're just trying to stay afloat. That's why our environment ministry has invested in Sustainability CoLab so that they can help small businesses with the cost of going green. That's how the capand-trade system is going to work: Big polluters are going to pay into a fund and that money will go to helping us transition our homes and our businesses to a low-carbon economy.

In Waterloo region so far, the participants that voluntarily signed up managed to reduce their carbon emissions by 53,000 tonnes last year alone. That is the same as taking 12,000 cars off the road.

The advantage for us here in Ontario is that we can look to other jurisdictions that have already done capand-trade—in Quebec and in California—and we can learn from their best practices. This works for the economy, it's good for the environment, and Bill 172 is going to save you and me money in the end.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a pleasure to rise. The member from Oxford talks about having a hard time believing this government anymore. I see the Liberals and their Kool-Aid. They used to just sprinkle it around, but nobody believes them anymore, so it's flowing out of their jugs in large amounts. People need a solution here and all they're hearing are more promises that never pan out.

We've heard how the Green Energy Act was going to save the planet. Well, the only thing it has done, and will do, is cost the people of Ontario around \$170 billion. That's what the Auditor General reported last year. That's what the people of Ontario will be paying until 2032. It's a huge waste of money—money that, I guess, could have gone to their \$160 billion in infrastructure, if you look at just that money coming out of the economy that the ordinary ratepayers are paying.

This bill is the latest Liberal money grab, because they're out of money. The budget that they issued just a week and a half ago was very clear. We see this \$1.9 billion going directly into revenue. All the talk about trying to save the world—this has nothing to do with anything but trying to balance the budget on the backs of

Ontarians, when we should be looking at trying to help them.

Businesses are leaving. This is another case where our businesses will be disadvantaged. We'll lose more jobs, as we've seen over in the manufacturing sector that's left. A plan that was focused on helping Ontario, the Green Energy Act, has actually hurt Ontario and taken away resources, and now we see the next new low. The government is looking at new ways of extracting money from our people, but the people are leaving and the businesses are leaving, and we'll have nothing to show for it but a lower standard of living.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Oxford county. He always brings the true, lived experience of his constituents to this place.

He mentioned the impact that Bill 172 will have on the cost of living for those in rural Ontario and his riding. Our members have mentioned the north as well, where they don't have options. They don't have transit options and they haven't for quite some time, especially under this government.

He did mention, of course, that the concern that I think we all have is around fairness, and then also around transparency, around where the funding is actually going to go. It's interesting, because late last week, the Financial Accountability Officer even expressed his concerns, just to validate the member from Oxford county. He said, in his most recent commentary, "It is unclear to what extent these new" cap-and-trade "revenues will be directly tied to new program spending or can be used to fund existing spending commitments."

1550

I don't think that you can blame us, on this side of the House, for having some real confidence issues, some real trust issues. Look at the Trillium Trust accounting procedures, for example. This confidence is also linked to their track record. Even when the minister made the announcement of the \$100-million energy retrofit program that would be connected to natural gas like Union and Enbridge, there are whole jurisdictions that don't deal with Enbridge or Union Gas. Kitchener was one of them, and part of Kingston was another. We even heard in the House yesterday that—the Minister of Energy stood up in this House and said, "Don't worry about it"; if you're on propane or other sources, Union Gas and Enbridge are going to take care of you. That isn't the responsibility of Union Gas or Enbridge. That is the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Oxford: two minutes.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Essex, Kitchener Centre, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and from Kitchener–Waterloo for their kind comments. There's a couple I want to respond to.

The member from Kitchener Centre made a great point when she talked about the good things that were already happening in Kitchener to reduce the carbon footprint by a number of industries, and that was without this legislation. It kind of points out that it's already happening. The only difference between what the businesses in her community were doing last year and what they're doing this year is that the government is creating a slush fund that they're going to use for other things, while they're still going to be expecting the people in Kitchener Centre to do exactly the same thing they've been doing and hopefully reducing our carbon footprint. It really points out that the money they are collecting is not really for that purpose.

As I was listening to the other comments, and particularly the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I realized the—what shall we say?—boondoggle that they created with the Green Energy Act and the prices they're paying for that hydro. Well, actually, a lot of times they're paying to get rid of the power that's being produced by them. If you look at what they've been telling us from across the aisle, in fact they may very well be using the slush fund to help pay some of that cost to cover up the bungle and the mess they made out of that. I think that was the first time that that may very well be happening.

The last thing I want to say is to just take a moment and thank the members who spoke from the New Democratic Party. I think on this issue we can say that, universally, we're all in favour, and, as pointed out by the New Democratic Party, we all support the need for reducing the carbon footprint in this province and to do what we can to avoid climate change. We on this side of the House believe that that can't be done or shouldn't be done strictly by creating a slush fund so the government can pay for their mistakes as opposed to bringing forward legislation that will actually accomplish something.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before I move on, I just want to remind members that, when they come into the chamber and leave the chamber, they are to acknowledge the Chair. There are a couple that try to sneak out when I'm distracted and don't nod. I'll be watching.

Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order: the member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Just to let you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm leaving the chamber.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, thank you. Very funny. Very funny.

The member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, listen, I don't think there is any progressive person in the province of Ontario who doesn't understand that we have to be able to move on trying to reduce emissions in our environment when it comes to what goes in the atmosphere.

I saw, for example, this weekend—which was interesting—the Conservative Party finally admitted something has got to be done. They've taken an approach in order to deal with emissions into the environment, particularly the air, by going the way of a carbon tax. Now,

that is not my preferred model. Quite frankly, I think a carbon tax is problematic. I think the Conservatives will have to answer to voters about whether this is a good or a bad idea; I'll leave that for another debate.

The point I want to make at the beginning is that we can't afford to do nothing. We were chatting about this yesterday—some of our colleagues. We all differ somewhat in our approach of what we would do, but we all agree we have to do something because, if we don't get this under control, it's going to become too late. We do need to make sure that we deal with emissions so that we're able to properly make sure that we don't continue harming our planet, the place that we all call home.

Now, this particular cap-and-trade program the government is purporting could work. There's a possibility that it can work. Of course, that's why we're going to support it. But it's very dependent on how the government sets it up.

I want to give you just but one example of how you could utilize cap-and-trade and the revenue from cap-and-trade in a very positive way. The idea of cap-and-trade supposedly is, aside being from able to trade carbon credits—and I'll leave that for somebody else to debate—that the money you raise with cap-and-trade you then invest in technologies and industries that are able to lessen their reliance on energy that causes carbon emissions. The consumer has better choice and we're able to spur new industries, and that is a good thing.

I want to give an example in my own riding about how that would be possible. There's a company that I've met with called Zenyatta minerals. They have a graphite deposit just north of Hearst. This graphite deposit—believe it or believe it not—is the richest graphite deposit known to man. There is no graphite of the purity that we see in this particular deposit just north of Constance Lake and Hearst.

The interesting part with this particular mineral is: Guess what you use graphite for, Mr. Speaker? Making fuel cells and batteries that are utilized for cars. There's a real opportunity here to be able to utilize a natural resource from the province of Ontario—in this case, graphite—and transforming that graphite into a product that is able to lessen our reliance on energy such as gas and oil by building fuel cell and battery technology that will allow us to better utilize wind and solar power in our own homes and, yes, build cars that are able to utilize battery technology that makes those cars affordable and practical.

But that's not going to happen on its own because what's likely to happen with Zenyatta minerals is that if the province doesn't find some way of incentivizing somebody in the private sector to build those batteries and fuel cells in Ontario, guess what will happen to the graphite? It will be mined, it will be refined, it will be shipped to India, it will be shipped somewhere else in order to add value.

Why wouldn't we, as a province, say, "Let's take the money that we raise from cap-and-trade and utilize that in order to build what needs to be built to support those

industries which are able to utilize that mineral, graphite"? Then, Ontario can become the leader when it comes to developing technologies around batteries and fuel cells and produce those products here in Ontario, where you can utilize the manufacturing jobs, create jobs for Ontarians, support mining activity in northern Ontario that essentially builds our economy, but, more importantly, the product that we then build allows not only our jurisdiction here in Ontario, but anywhere else we export our batteries or fuel cells, to lessen their reliance on the use of carbon.

For example, in a place like where I live, where there is no natural gas—there is your wood stove and electricity to heat your home out in Kamiskotia Lake, where our cottage is. I'm there pretty well all the time with my wife; it pretty well became our principal residence after a while. There is no option for natural gas. I would love to invest in solar panels, I would love to invest in a wind turbine of some type or a combination system to generate electricity. But it's not yet affordable and efficient because there is no mechanism by which to store the electricity that I can utilize on a day that I need that power.

If we were able to develop this fuel cell technology here in Ontario and we were able to develop the battery technology here in Ontario, utilizing graphite mined north of Hearst and Constance Lake, and utilize those products in order to make battery technology or fuel cell technology that makes some sense, guess what? I'm then able to lessen my reliance on utilizing either wood or electricity, in this case, and utilize the sun and the wind to generate electricity. On the days when it isn't sunny and the wind isn't blowing, you can utilize your batteries in order to supply electricity to your home.

It just seems to me that would be a natural fit for something that we could do that (a) really does something positive to address the issue of the environment and emissions into our atmosphere, and (b) assists our economy to be able to build opportunities here in Ontario so we don't always have to export our technology and we don't have to export our jobs into other markets.

1600

Ontario is in an amazing position. We have some of the best areas to be able to find natural resources—everything from copper to graphite to gold to you name it—but we're really bad at adding value to it. We mine it and then we ship it out where somebody else adds value to it outside of Ontario, normally outside of Canada.

That's why we as New Democrats have put forward legislation that essentially says that minerals that are mined in Ontario must be processed in Ontario. I would go one step further, which is that we need to add value in Ontario, because that then develops an industry here in this province that can't be exported. In other words, if you did it right, if you were to say, "I'll use the graphite in order to be able to build the technology around battery and fuel cell technology here in Ontario," it would be hard to outsource those jobs to China, India or wherever it might be. You'd be able to do that in places like

Burlington, Timmins or wherever it might be that you want to build those particular types of industries, and strengthen our economy at the same time.

But the key is—and this is where I'll end, because unfortunately I only have 10 minutes—will the monies raised by cap-and-trade actually be used for that type of initiative? If so, I think this is a good thing. Then we can all be proud of what we've done in this Legislature, to not only green our planet, but to build a stronger economy for Ontario.

But as I read the legislation now—I might be wrong, but as I read it now, and I want this bill to go to committee, so that other people can look at it and tell us what they think—it looks like the government set it up so that they can actually use some of this money for general revenue to pay for other things. I'd just say to the government across the way that it's a good initiative, but it's got to work right.

The other thing I want to touch on very quickly is the issue of gas tax, because the government is saying that part of what they're going to do here is increase the price of gas in order to build the dollars necessary to be able to invest in green technology and green initiatives. Well, it's a real penalty for people in northern Ontario, because in many cases we have no other option but to utilize our vehicles.

Yes, Timmins has transit, but most communities in northern Ontario don't have transit. So when you want to go from point A to point B in your community, or point A to point B between communities, because bus service is not what it needs to be and there is no train service, you're essentially left with walking, snowshoeing, taking your dogsled or driving your vehicle on the road. I don't have a dogsled, but you follow my point.

The government is saying they're going to raise gas taxes as a mechanism to green our economy. I would warn the government that that's going to be a real problem for people in rural and northern Ontario who don't have the other options to be able to make a decision not to use gas. The government is going to have to think through how the heck we do this in some way that doesn't penalize people because they happen to live in a part of the province that doesn't have the type of transit and intercity transportation that we have between places like Ottawa all the way down to Windsor.

With that, Speaker, I want to thank you for this time to debate, and I look forward to the comments from honourable members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's always helpful to listen to the member from Timmins—James Bay. We have worked together on a great number of projects, and certainly have the same goals in mind in terms of northern Ontario.

I think it is important to point out that this is an important piece of legislation, which I think is recognized by the member. He has come up with some interesting points, particularly related to a company I know well,

Zenyatta. As I know the member also knows, we've been able to support the company through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., which was crucial to allowing them to continue to go on.

They are really creative. I had an opportunity, as I suspect the member opposite did, to be down at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference over the last number of days. I saw Aubrey Eveleigh, who is the head of Zenyatta; he has got some truly creative concepts in mind, and I certainly see those possibilities as well. We want to encourage them to happen.

But also important, I think, is that the member suggested that, indeed, the proceeds for the projects may not all necessarily be going to projects that will reduce greenhouse gas pollution. Indeed, they will; that's committed. The money will be going into those projects, and I think there are some real opportunities for us.

I've got very little time left, suddenly, but the bottom line is, we know that one of the most innovative industries is the mining sector, in terms of what we've seen in the efforts they've made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the last number of years. That's one of the reasons we're working so closely with them to make sure we get it right.

This an important piece of legislation. We need to set a long-term framework for climate action, a stronger foundation, certainly, for a cap-and-trade program. I appreciate the comments and look forward to continuing to work with the member for Timmins–James Bay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There's been a lot of talk about where this money for the cap-and-trade will go. I'd like to quote some of the government's own statistics from Bill 172.

We have said this in the past, and we're going to prove it here today: The cap-and-trade money will be treated exactly like the Hydro One sale money. It is going to artificially reduce the deficit, and here's how they're doing it. Their own bill, Bill 172, on page 47, definition 68, section 2, item 3: This is where they've buried this, which is what they did on Hydro One. The money can be used "to reimburse the crown for expenditures incurred by the crown, directly or indirectly, for any purpose described in paragraph 2." So you go up to paragraph 2 and you go through that, and you find that it's any public money under subsection (2). So you go to the back where the subsections are, and it very, very clearly says that the money in schedule 1 can be used for "initiatives relating to the reduction of greenhouse gas from transportation including the following ... public transit vehicles and infrastructure...."

So again, Speaker, peel it all back. They can use the money for public transit vehicles and infrastructure, and that's what they say they will use it for, except for the fact that it's to reimburse the government for monies already spent. Basically, they put that money—the \$130 billion over 10 years; now it's \$160 billion over 12

years—in the budget. That's already accounted for. They will put the cap-and-trade money against those items, and take the already-budgeted money out to artificially reduce their deficit. That's it, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to thank the member from Nipissing. Our caucus and our researchers have found and tracked the same sort of thing in this bill, in terms of where potentially the money from the cap-and-trade system and the revenue generated could go. A lot of "mays," but not a lot of definitive answers in terms of where it will go.

We know that if you are to have buy-in from the general public and if your bill and your plan are to be effective, the money that flows and the revenue that is generated through the funds have to be targeted. They have to be accountable. They have to be transparent. They can't go to general revenues. You won't get people to buy in. But Minister, it is on your conscience to speak up at caucus and to tell your Premier that this can't happen. It's far too important an issue.

I'm trying as a member—a partisan—to defuse the inherent, embedded partisanship that can happen, as we've seen all around the planet, and especially in the United States. That can happen in this debate. I'm trying. It's very difficult, but we would be best served if we really looked at the technical aspects of this. It is complex. None of us in here are environmental researchers or climate change experts, I don't think. Many of us know some of the basic science around it. What we all know is that it poses a real and imminent threat to the civilization of the planet. It can't be understated.

Whether we do it right is upon us. If we don't do anything, it will be cataclysmic. If we do it wrong, it will be also cataclysmic. Let's get it right.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm delighted to add my voice to this bill. Not too long ago, I ran into a whole bunch of seniors in my riding of Trinity–Spadina. They complained about how the price of vegetables has been going up to a point that they really feel it's becoming challenging because they all live on fixed incomes. Yellow chives were selling for \$22 a pound, which is absurd, and it has almost tripled in price in a very short while. I talked to my friends in that business. I said, "What's going on?" They told me it's because down in the States, where they import vegetables from during the winter, they're experiencing major floods due to extreme weather.

We all know that it is becoming more and more challenging for people to survive, especially the most vulnerable in our community. I look at my two kids and I think that the world is so different for them and will be different for them when they grow up. I have to say I am hopeful because I've attended announcements for electric cars, I've read up on information on better power storage technologies and better materials for retrofit programs,

but we need a government to lead the charge. We need a government to set the structure so we can focus resources on these aspects.

I appreciate the points that the member from Timmins–James Bay brought up. I want to point to the fact that, if passed, this bill, the proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, will ensure transparency and accountability by committing to investing proceeds into projects that reduce greenhouse gas pollution and by establishing a greenhouse gas reduction account with the funds.

I'm quite confident that the government is going to achieve its goal, and I look forward to supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Timmins—James Bay, two minutes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, pardon the skepticism, and I want to touch on the last point, which is that you're quite confident that this government is going to achieve its goal. Listen, these are the same guys who brought us the energy system that we have today and the changes to the energy system that have seen the price of hydro go up by two or three times.

This government doesn't have a very good track record when it comes to managing some of this stuff. This is the same government that tried to manage a change from a blended system of air ambulance transfers to one where we now have a public one, but it messed up so much and ended up costing us more money than we had, quite frankly.

So yes, the opposition is saying the bill is going in the right direction. Nobody is arguing that the government should not have a cap-and-trade bill. Even the Conservatives agree that you've got to do something, which is—man, that's a step forward. Now they are on to the carbon tax. Fair enough.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You two guys can get along, Liberals and Conservatives. You're used to it; you're about the same, anyway.

My point is that our fear is that the government says the right things, is making it look as if they're going to do something, but in fact, depending on what the details are in the bill—and I think the member from Nipissing is right, and it's the same point that the member for Kitchener-Waterloo has made, and the member from Beaches—not Beaches-East York, but Toronto-Danforth—

Ms. Catherine Fife: I miss him.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I miss Beaches-East York, too.

But the point is, they have been saying, "Listen, when you look at the details of the bill, this thing has some real problems when it comes to making sure the money from cap-and-trade is actually utilized for reducing the amount of emissions into our atmosphere." And that's not a good thing.

We'll vote for this bill, we are going to allow it to go into committee and we are going to fight like hell, as they say, in order to make sure that we get the changes that we need to make this bill work, because we can't afford not to make it work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's me. Not quite, but it's close enough.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act.

There's no debate in this House about whether or not climate change is real. The Conservatives were the first ones to recognize that.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I purposely started out that way to get the reaction from the Liberals, because they like to pretend they have a lock on caring about the environment. But the reality is, when you look at their legislation, it's not about the environment; it's about their addiction. It's about their addiction to spending, and they have taken advantage.

I made that comment because I recognize, Speaker, as I travel around my riding and as I meet people, and as I talk to my children and their friends, that people out there are concerned about our future. They want to make sure that we're taking care of the issues that matter to them, and that we'll ensure that their future is a healthier one and that the environment is protected. One of the challenges that we face today is the amount of carbon that is emitted into the atmosphere.

Let it be known, Speaker, that where the Liberals like to claim that they're the champions of reducing emissions from coal—yes, they finished the job. They happened to be elected in 2003; whoever was elected in 2003 was going to deal with that issue. But let's make it very clear that it was the Conservatives, under Premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, who made the commitment by ordering the closure of the Lakeview Generating Station. That was the first serious act about closing.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They tabled and set the date, and all you guys did, Kevin, was put the padlock on the gate. That's what you guys did. They set the table to ensure that that station would be closed by legislation. That is what was done, and that was the beginning of a recognition that, at some point in this province, we were going to stop generating electricity by the burning of coal. Well, that's been accomplished.

But the Liberals not only have—yes, they closed the coal plants and we passed legislation here ensuring that they would not be reopened. But what did the Liberals do when they were desperate—and they are desperate today. They're very desperate, and they'll pull anything when it

comes to trying to hold on to power.

Speaker, in the by-election in Whitby-Oshawa, the Liberals went so far as to go around saying, "If you elect the Conservatives, they're going to start burning coal in the coal plants again. They're going to bring back coal." They got it a little wrong. We're bringing Coe—not coal, Coe. We're bringing Coe to Queen's Park, and he's here today because the Liberals went into Whitby-Oshawa

and told bold-faced lies about what the Conservatives' plan was.

I never said a word about a single member, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm glad you defined that you didn't say an individual, but you labelled the whole party. You'll withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw. The Liberal candidate lied.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're pushing your luck. Withdraw. Don't play games. Withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw. I'd like some help from the table on that. So you can't call a member of the public a liar in this place?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I think you can keep quiet, too. All right?

In fact, I'm going to have the Clerk come and we're going to discuss it while you sit down.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. Now that I've been questioning and it's been officially said, I was correct. You cannot say that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You cannot say that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You cannot say that, and I don't want to hear it again. You've said it twice, and if you challenge me again, you're warned.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'll be watching closely for anybody on this side of the House—on any side of the House—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't need you to be doing my job. I'll be doing the watching and you'll be doing the listening. Thank you very much.

I believe that the member from Niagara Falls nodded when he came in. I'm not sure, because I was distracted. I hope he did.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I absolutely nodded to you, sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you very much.

1620

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much.

Apparently we're going to continue with the debate. I will have some questions later about some other people in our society who have been called similar names in this House and no one has ever been castigated for it, interestingly enough. However, let's get back to the debate.

Whatever happened in the Whitby-Oshawa by-election, members of the government party, the candidate of the government party and workers for the government party were going around saying something that was completely not the position of the PC Party. They even took out radio ads. And do you know what happened? The people in Whitby-Oshawa said, "Not this time. Fool me once, shame on me." There you go.

Here they are: The party that wants to portray themselves as the protector of the environment has come in with this cap-and-trade scheme that has got nothing to do with the environment. It is about filling the coffers of the Liberal Party, about filling the coffers of the government, so that they can spend money on any one of their other schemes. My colleague from Nipissing has pointed that out.

They're going to charge 4.3 cents a litre on gasoline, and who's going to get hurt the most? People in ridings like Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Prince Edward-Hastings, Dufferin-Caledon, Nipissing and Chatham-Kent-Essex. The TTC doesn't run through Palmer Rapids; the TTC doesn't run through Stirling.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say to my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings, no, it does not.

They're going to get hit with this tax. We don't know when it's coming, but we're told it's coming. And where is the money going to go? My colleague from Nipissing has pointed that out very clearly; he's done the research. If you read the bill, basically they've got to put this money into a segregated fund—pack it away—and it's got to be spent on Green Investment Fund-types of projects, but they can hive an equal amount of money out of the budget that was earmarked for those types of projects in the first place.

It is not about the environment; in fact, it never was. It's just another way to try to balance the books by 2017-2018, so they can go to the people and say, "Hey, look at what we did."

But as the Financial Accountability Officer has brought us warnings, it's the structural deficit that is the problem with this government. Any kind of sales and one-time cash grabs to try to make the books look better is not going to change the actual situation that the province is in. Their cap-and-trade scheme is the wrong way to go about it. The cap-and-trade system has failed in Europe and failed here.

It doesn't force anybody to really reduce emissions. It's like if you've got a plate of rice and you're not really interested in eating, but you're moving it around steadily. You're just moving it around and moving it around. The amount stays on the plate. It doesn't disappear; it just keeps shifting around and moving. Somebody is playing with their food but nothing is actually dropping. The carbon emissions aren't going down.

Our plan for carbon pricing here in Ontario will actually ensure that carbon emissions go down, and it will be revenue-neutral. It will not be on the backs of people who care about the environment. The Liberals are taking advantage of how people feel about the environment so that they can pick their pockets and look after their pet projects while not worrying about whether emissions go down or not. That's wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's always a hard act to follow the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. There was some energy with his 10 minutes on Bill 172. I would just like to say that the member's first point was that the Liberal Party doesn't hold a monopoly on everything that is environmental. I think that we would completely agree with him on that.

He made the point that the Liberal government has a credibility issue with regard to where money goes and a lack of transparency around the revenue that comes into this place. He made the point that there is going to be a significant amount of revenue that comes in through the cap-and-trade program. He also made the point that his party has made a shift; they have shifted, and for some reason the Liberals like to mock them.

For us, this would be the place to take the high road because, as the member from Essex has pointed out, this is too serious to get it wrong and it's too serious to play games. What we see with this shell game around the funding and the revenue that's going to come in to this place, especially with regard to schedule 9—and with schedule 9, the changes as they relate to Bill 173 aren't even necessary. Yet, this government has said that there will be dedicated funds, on which they backtrack later on.

Unfortunately, the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has accurately portrayed the distrust that we have around where the funding is going to go as it relates to cap-and-trade. We have an emerging body of evidence with this government as to how they mismanage funds when those funds do come into this place, and quite honestly we share the concerns as expressed, because I do believe that, around accountability and transparency, those concerns are genuine.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; he is a hard act to follow.

I do want to say just very quickly, to the comments from the members from Timmins–James Bay, Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo, that there is evidence that this is a very important bill. It's about the future of our children and our grandchildren. I'm glad that there has been a conversion on the road to Damascus from the opposition—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: No, there is no plan. The plan was hatched on the weekend. If it's on the back of anything, it's on the back of an envelope because a few people haven't taken down their petitions yet. So, not that I doubt the sincerity of that, and I think it's healthy that we're having this debate—I believe that it is too serious for us to make it too partisan. But what we need to remember is that it is the opposition's duty to say, "We don't trust you; we oppose you. We're going to hold you to account." I get that.

Government is about choices. I know how they make choices over here, which is, "We want you to spend more on this and do more on this and tax these people." But every day I listen to the Leader of the Opposition and members on the other side—whom I have a great deal of respect for—stand up and say, "I want you to spend more money on this. You need to spend money on this hospi-

tal. You need to pay doctors more." But do you know what? In the next breath you say, "Structural deficit. Debt. You've got to get control." You fought us every—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Sit down. Stop the clock.

Are we all done with the yelling?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, he got us upset.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't think you were asked to speak.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We got them upset; he got us upset.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes, that's fine. You're really pushing it today.

Are we all settled down now? Good.

Finish

Mr. John Fraser: Simply put, government is about choices, but you can't choose everything; you need to pick a lane.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's rather interesting how people can get really riled up in this House and get the anxiety levels up. Unfortunately for those who may be of senior category, they'll have to pay more for their drugs because they need to calm themselves down.

Back in 1970—I'm going to take you back in time, Speaker. Not to say that you would remember this, but I do. There was a movie called Love Story, starring Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw; you may remember it. It starts off with the words "Where do I begin / To tell the story of" just how bad this bill really is? Andy Williams—

Interjection.

1630

Mr. Rick Nicholls: No, I won't sing it. Andy Williams wrote the lyrics, recorded that song and it was a big hit.

But, you know, one of the things that I really want to talk about is that this Liberal cap-and-trade scheme is nothing more than command-and-control economics, as they talk about. It's under the guise of a market-driven solution. In short, here's what we have: We have a government that designs the game. They set the rules. They select the players. They appoint the officials. They pick the winners and losers. Obviously, their game is rigged, and those who stand to benefit are, perhaps, the Liberals and companies and consultants with close ties.

As a result of this, I take a look at what their regulatory scheme is. One of the things that I find rather interesting is this: In a briefing, the bureaucracy said that they're developing regulations that will be released later this year for administrative penalties, administrative fees and offset credits. Do you know what that tells me, Speaker? It tells me that they have no plan, they have no details, and yet they are forcing and they are ramming this cap-and-trade bill through the Legislature, which we feel is totally unfair. They need more consultation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew—oh, sorry. The member from Essex.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, if you want me to go, I'll go.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, but I've got you on my mind.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. Sorry, I wasn't sure.

It's kind of tragic to hear how quickly the debate in this House has descended. Again, I'm going to try to bring it to the policy and to the real threat that this poses: the fact that people are working really hard on this issue around the world and we know that it takes a global effort; the fact we are seven billion human beings on this planet, quickly going to nine billion on a planet that has finite resources that fuel our economy, and that we know, in terms of the structure of our economy, have led to the demise of our environment and have led to climate change. We know that now. It is indisputable. Perhaps that's why we're hearing some new ideas from the members of the opposition.

The question is, how do we act quickly and how do we act fairly, equitably and with transparency? I would love nothing more than to see the efforts of this House produce something that we can all agree on, that we can all support and all champion, because of the nature of this threat. I'm not hearing the concern from my colleagues here. I don't know whether you get it or not, but all points indicate that, within the next 20 to 30 years, the global average temperature will be unsustainable.

I'd like to hear specifics from government members and I'd like to hear the tone of the debate reflect that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has two minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the questions and comments from the various members: the member for Ottawa South, the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, the member for Essex and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Yes, sometimes this place does get a little raucous, especially when members on one side of the House don't like comments being directed at them for their own actions. But this is a serious issue, and the PCs clearly tabled on the weekend that they have a different plan for tackling climate change, one that we believe will be more acceptable to the people because it will be far more fair and it will be transparent. It will not be shrouded in some kind of secret curtains so that the people don't understand how this money that the government is going to be collecting from the cap-and-trade scheme is actually going to go back into environmentally enhancing projects that will help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that are being emitted into the atmosphere.

On the other hand, what we talked about on the weekend—and in the course of time, our plan will become very, very clear, defined and transparent. You will see the difference as we approach the electorate in 2018. This bill will be the law by then. This will be the law because they have the majority and, by the sounds of it, they have the support of the third party. But we will be able to point out the deficiencies and the wrong-headedness of their plan. We will be going to the people in 2018 with our plan, and I have a good feeling that ours will be the one they accept.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the residents and citizens of Kitchener-Waterloo today. This is an issue that the residents of Kitchener-Waterloo care deeply about, and it's an important debate for us to be having in this House.

The NDP has been consistent in our support of a capand-trade system, but we've also been consistent in our ask of the government that the system actually work. We can't afford to have a system that fails to lower emissions and fix the damage that has already been done. We need a system that is fair, effective and transparent. The plan that the Liberals have put forward has some gaps in it. We have raised many questions around the fairness, the effectiveness and, quite honestly, the transparency of the revenue that will come in to the province of Ontario.

The government has proposed dedicating a special fund to combat climate change using the revenues from cap-and-trade. This has been the key issue, I think, that people have talked about in this House. Yet the greenhouse gas reduction account that is proposed and that they envision is far from effective and has the potential to further marginalize those who are already most affected by the changing climate and rising emissions. Instead of using this money to directly invest in reduction, the government has created a greenwashed slush fund that they're calling the greenhouse gas reduction account. It's not a separate, special-purpose account, but an accounting procedure with flexible rules that allow the government to spend the money on anything it wants. The government wants Ontarians to believe their word rather than what is written in their budget bill. Frankly, Speaker, I think Ontarians will rely on what's in black and white.

These revenues absolutely should be used to further help mitigate the effects of climate change, but this simply cannot be done if the government is unwilling to tie this funding to evidence and require tangible results. There's no commitment to record the inflows and outflows of money. The balance of the account can be spent on programs directly or indirectly related to greenhouse gas emissions. The money is meant to be spent on greenhouse-gas-reducing programs, but the ministry has yet to set guidelines for what this actually means. So you cannot blame us for raising some concerns about the transparency of these revenues.

There are no standards set for offsets, and there is no legislative requirement that anyone confirm the programs will lead to real, additional, verifiable and permanent reductions, as required under the Western Climate Initiative that Ontario signed on to. This is what the province signed on to and, as it stands right now, they are not compliant because they have not signed on to the transparency about where the revenue is going to go.

It's no wonder that people are skeptical of this government's commitment to properly manage this money. The Financial Accountability Officer, as I already mentioned, even expressed his concerns about it. In his most recent commentary, he said, "It is unclear to what extent these new" cap-and-trade "revenues will be directly tied to new program spending or can be used to fund existing spending commitments." The Liberals can say that this fund will further their climate change strategy as much as they want, but they've set it up to have as little oversight as possible.

Aside from the loose requirements for the greenhouse-gas-reducing programs, the new cap-and-trade scheme will also completely avoid any involvement of this Legislature's independent officers. It's no wonder they would do this when some members of this government worry that evidence-based policy is too complex for the Auditor General.

Not only are the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General cut out of the loop, but this legislation makes no mention at all of Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, a role established under a previous NDP government. The Environmental Commissioner is required, under section 58.2 of the Environmental Bill of Rights, to provide an annual report on the government's efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, but apparently, this shouldn't require the right to information on cap-andtrade other than what the government decides it wants to disclose. So you can see that this is a missed opportunity. You can see why we have some issues with the way that this is structured. Mr. Speaker, how can we expect to tackle climate change when one of our province's environmental leaders, an officer of this Legislature, is left in the dark? And I pose that question honestly to the government side of the House.

1640

There are several ways in which this government climate change strategy also misses other marks. Take the plan to fund energy retrofits, for example: As part of an overall climate change strategy, the government has pledged \$100 million to help Ontarians retrofit their homes and be more energy efficient. It might sound very good on paper, but what the people of this province weren't told is that this money is only available through two energy providers, Enbridge and Union Gas. This was confirmed, actually, on Tuesday morning by the Minister of Energy. What about the thousands of Ontarians who aren't served by these companies, either because of where they live or the fuel that they use to heat their homes? What we have heard, most recently in a conversation with the farmers, is that they're trying to get off the grid. They are trying to get off the grid because they can't afford the costs of energy and of heat. There are some of my constituents who live in Kitchener who certainly won't be benefitting from these retrofits since none of them are served by Union or Enbridge.

The government said, "Trust us, we're going to take care of it. Trust us." But you know, people don't trust this government. Because it's not in the bill and it's not in the budget, we have serious trust issues. In fact, if you look at the entire province, only 37,000 household across

this province are eligible—37,000. How can this government claim to have an effective climate change strategy if this is the kind of policy they implement? What about those low-income Ontarians or people who aren't homeowners, or the people living in northern Ontario who use other fuels while dealing with harsher winter conditions than others face further south? Mr. Speaker, it's clear that when it comes to action on climate change, this government is happier to put power in the hands of big industry and overlook the needs of those most affected by rising emissions.

These retrofits are one of the multiple ways that businesses will stand to disproportionately benefit from this new cap-and-trade scheme while regular Ontarians must be the ones who pay the price. The government has proposed that all large emitters get free allowances for four years. The NDP understands the need to keep Ontario's business competitive in an increasingly global economy, which is why we agree that trade-exposed industries should be considered when exemptions are being made. But the government will have any and all large emitters, regardless of the industry and regardless of how much they pollute, get a holiday from paying their dues. While big businesses can enjoy their break, Ontarians—everyday Ontarians themselves—will start paying their share immediately.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association has become one of the many voices recognizing this problem. Erica Stahl, who is the CELA counsel, wrote, "While the cap-and-trade bill does not include any measures that would alleviate the impact of energy price increases on low-income Ontarians, it is highly attentive to any problem, real or imagined, that the cap-and-trade system could cause for industry."

This speaks to the priorities of this government. Our counterparts in California, who have also signed on to the Western Climate Initiative, didn't wait to include businesses in all sectors in their cap-and-trade regulation. Ontario should follow suit. Giving those large emitters a holiday for four years is simply not fair, and Ontarians recognize this.

Given that Ontario has lagged behind in its efforts to fight climate change, we've been able to see what others have done before us. As I mentioned, California took action very quickly—Quebec, British Columbia and, most recently, Alberta. California requires that 25% of its carbon revenues go to helping disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Please, listen to that suggestion. There has to be a way for Ontario move forward and not further disenfranchise or marginalize people in this province who are already hurting as we try to tackle the issue of greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the bill as it is crafted right now raises three major concerns for us, just in case you weren't listening.

It is an issue of fairness. California has already led the way. You don't need to invent the wheel. You don't need another task force or working group on this.

Make sure that you dedicate 25% of the funds that come in to alleviate the impact that this will have on the poorest of Ontarians.

Please address the transparency. We have to. We have to do the due diligence. As the finance critic for Ontario's New Democrats, I have to make sure that the money that comes into this place is spent responsibly. We have some serious trust issues, as already mentioned.

We need a fair cap-and-trade program. The possibility is here, the potential is here, and we're willing to work with them, but we want to make sure that it's an effective program and that it actually addresses the climate change crisis that this world is facing and that this province is facing because of your inaction over many, many years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to lend my voice in support of the proposed Bill 172.

I listened attentively to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo about her concerns, but I think the piece I want to draw to her attention, and those who are watching at home, is about the proposed bill and the creation of the GHG, better known as the greenhouse gas reduction emission account.

On the explanatory note in the bill it clearly states, "Payments from the Consolidated Revenue Fund: An account called the greenhouse gas reduction account is established in the public accounts."

On page 47 of our proposed bill, it clearly lays out what the account is going to do and where the proceeds are going. I just want to do a quick—because my time is really short—where the money is going. The member opposite is concerned about where the auction proceeds are going to go. It's going to go to energy sources and uses such as the production of renewable energy; land use and buildings, such as retrofitting of buildings; transportation—the Minister of Transportation is here. He can tell you that it's going to focus on alternative and low-carbon forms of transportation, compared with traditional gasoline and diesel vehicles.

This afternoon we were at the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and we heard from witnesses who came before the committee about the whole issue of natural gas vehicles.

The other piece here is that I want to remind the member opposite that this morning we had a breakfast session with American legislators, talking about how great this province is doing in terms of green, clean energy initiatives and, more important, when we got rid of the coal plants and what this says across North America.

At the end of the day, this is what the government is doing. This is one part of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm pleased to bring some remarks on Bill 172 and the presentation by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, who always does her homework before speaking here in the Legislature and who did a very good job outlining some of the problems with Bill 172.

The biggest problem, when it comes right down to it, isn't with anything that's in the bill, although there are a lot of problems with what's in the bill. It has to do with the word—I think she said "mistrust." There is a lot of mistrust when it comes to the operations of this government. They are preying—not with an A, with an E—on the goodwill of the people of Ontario when it comes to greenhouse gas emissions. What they're actually doing is hauling in \$1.9 billion.

We've seen this play out before in this Legislature with this government when they brought in something called a health premium. Remember how that health premium was supposed to solve all the province's health care woes? And where did the money from that health premium go? It went into general revenues, and we know what kind of problems we have in our health care system today because the money didn't go where it was intended to go.

We can't trust this government to get it right. They're sucking \$1.9 billion out of our economy, out of the pockets of taxpayers. What they're doing is going to have more of an impact in filling the pockets of lobbyists and lawyers than it is on saving forests or ice caps. That's the bottom line with the way this government has drawn up this bill.

There's big concern out there about the affordability—and the member brought it up—of living in Ontario as it is now. This bill is going to make it more expensive when it comes to electricity. When it comes to natural gas, it's going to make it more expensive to live in Ontario, and it's going to have very little impact on our environment.

1650

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm pleased to rise.

I've been in committee meetings for a couple of hours today talking about the environment, but what I'm really surprised about over the last number of hours is that I really don't think we're hitting on the real issue here. The issue here is that we have a problem with our climate. We have a real issue of making sure that our kids and our grandkids are going to have the same opportunity we had. We have a real issue here with water, that we may run out of water.

I know my colleague in front of me talked about, "What are we doing? Let's talk about it." We had a really good comment that talked about food. Look around at what's going on with our seniors today. Because of the price of food, they can barely afford to eat. More and more seniors today are going to food banks because they can't afford the food. Why has the cost of food gone up so much this winter? Some of it is because of the Canadian dollar, although we've seen some relief in the Canadian dollar in the last few days. Most of it is because of weather. Mostly it's because of what's going on with climate change.

I believe we all got elected here to do the right thing. It's not about scoring political points on this issue. I don't care where the Conservatives are. I don't really care where the Liberals are. I don't really care where we are. What we have to do is get this right because our kids and our grandkids are depending on us. That's why I ran to be an MPP. I wanted to have a say in that.

Last night, I had my granddaughter here for the first time, and I can't tell you how proud I was when she came into my office in 361. I showed her my office, where I work, and she asked me, "What do you do?" I said, "I try to make sure that you have the quality of life that I have." Let's not lose that in this most important debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of Labour

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure to rise on this bill. I think a lot of members around the House are saying the same thing in a number of different ways. Certainly, there are some people who I think have just come to realize that this is important, but a number of us from all sides of the House, in the past, have realized that this is something that we do absolutely have to get right. There's no going back on this one. This is one where, if we don't do something about this and we don't do the right thing about this, then the consequences are indeed very dire.

What we have before us is a stand-alone bill. It's before the House right now. People are passing their opinions on that, but certainly what I see in the bill is a very good, long-term framework for us to move forward. It's got to go to committee, obviously, and there may be opinions expressed there and some amendments. But if you look at the history of this, there was a very small amount of people some time ago who said, "You know what? If we don't do something, the consequences for the planet and the generation that comes after this aren't very good." Then you've got a few people who realized that these people were probably right. You had a large amount of people at that point saying, "No, that couldn't possibly happen. That can't possibly be true." I think we called them "climate change deniers," and we called them all sorts of other things.

But over the years, this has gathered steam and people are finally looking at the weather patterns we have out there, the temperature changes we're seeing just on a local basis, the amount of snowfall, the amount of rainfall and the severity of storms. All the evidence is pointing towards that very small group of people at the start who had it right. So now it appears, after the weekend, that we're all roughly on the same page. We all believe in climate change, and we all realize that we need to do something about it.

What we have before the House right now is a wonderful start to a relationship with other jurisdictions that are taking the same approach to that. The consequence of this is that we're going to be able to move ahead, and the young people who are sitting in this room are going to have air to breathe in the future and a planet that's worth living on. The other stuff that's being talked about—I don't have a whole lot of interest in that, but I really would like the House to get behind this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Kitchener-Waterloo, two minutes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to the members from Scarborough–Agincourt, Prince Edward–Hastings and Niagara Falls and to the Minister of Labour.

He just said it: He doesn't have a lot of interest in listening to transparency about where the money is going, the effectiveness of the program or the fairness of it. You have the ability to actually craft a piece of legislation that would work and that would address the concerns.

I just want to address the point around California. They're one of the signatories on the Western Climate Initiative as well, and they didn't wait to include businesses in all sectors in their cap-and-trade regulation; they made sure that all of those businesses were part of the program from the beginning. Ontario should follow suit. We've made that very clear.

Given that Ontario has lagged for so long—the critic from Toronto-Danforth mentioned that there is a credibility issue here. This has been reannounced and announced and announced. The credibility piece is where the money is going to go, how the government is going to collect the revenue, and how you're going to actually try to protect the most vulnerable people in our province.

When I say that California requires that 25% of its carbon revenues go to helping disadvantaged and marginalized communities mitigate the problem and adapt to a changing environment, this is something that the Premier and the minister should look into, because we are hearing that it's getting so expensive in the province of Ontario for everyone.

To the point that the member from Scarborough–Agincourt mentioned around where the money is going, it's not just me saying that there's a question about transparency. The Financial Accountability Officer has even expressed his concerns about it. He said, "It is unclear to what extent these new" cap-and-trade "revenues will be directly tied to new program spending or can be used to fund existing spending commitments." These concerns are real; they need to be addressed by this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate here this afternoon on Bill 172 representing the fine constituents of Prince Edward–Hastings riding.

Before I get into my remarks, I would just like to say that it's amazing to me, listening to the debate here this afternoon, how some on the government side think that the actual regulations or the direction of the bill is irrelevant. It just brings me back to the Green Energy Act. Everybody had their head buried in the sand on that bill on the government side. They thought it was going to be great. I'm sure that they all thought that the Green Energy Act was a good thing and it was going to clean up the air in the province of Ontario. They didn't care about the unintended consequences.

What are we dealing with now in Ontario just a few short years later? The highest electricity prices in North America, manufacturers have left Ontario in droves, and it's because the government didn't care about the finer details of the Green Energy Act. The devil is in the details. The devil is in the details when it comes to Bill 172 as well, this cap-and-trade deal.

Let's accept here that everyone wants to do something to help the environment. We've all come to that realization. If we're agreeing on nothing else this afternoon, let's all agree that there's a problem and acknowledge that maybe we disagree on how we go about fixing it. But if you don't know what's in your own bill, that's a problem. If you're going by what they told you in the corner office, I suggest that you actually read the documents; read the bills. You just heard our finance critic, Mr. Fedeli from Nipissing, earlier this afternoon talking about what's happening with the money from cap-and-trade. It's not actually going to go to clean up the environment or reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It's going to go to reduce the deficit or to be used on pet projects that the government wants it for.

We all want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario. We're doing a lot more than a lot of the other countries and a lot of the other provinces are doing, but that's not an argument against not doing anything. In hockey, if your goaltender stops every shot, you don't win the game. You still have to score a goal to win the game.

The problem with cap-and-trade, which is the centerpiece of both the budget document and in the speech, is that the details show that this is more of a show horse piece of legislation than it is a workhorse piece of legislation. If you want to reduce emissions—and, by the way, we all do—why are Ontario's biggest polluters all exempt from the immediate implementation of the program while families have to pay right now? People down the street from you, Mr. Speaker; people who live down the street from me; people who go to work every day: They have to pay now, but the biggest polluters in Ontario don't have to pay now. They don't have to pay it for a few years, if they ever do.

1700

As I said earlier, this is doing more about lining the pockets of lobbyists and lawyers than it is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. If you look at the regulatory formula that's being used to determine who gets credits and how many credits they get and what the emissions cap is going to be, there are almost a dozen independently auditable variables. Taking aside for a second the fact that the biggest polluters are currently exempt, the ones that aren't are experts at finding a way to reduce overhead and costs. There are accounting divisions, compliance divisions and administrative divisions in companies and industry associations across the province whose sole job is to keep costs down while making sure they either are or appear to be compliant.

The reality of the marketplace, the reality of any regulatory regime—and I say this as a guy who spent two

years as this party's red tape critic—is that the more complicated it is, the more loopholes you create and the less effective your regulation becomes.

This is a complicated cap-and-trade scheme. The medium-sized businesses—the men and women who can't afford the big accounting firms or the in-house compliance division that their major competitors can—end up shouldering a higher percentage of the regulatory burden. Complicated isn't just the opposite of simple; complicated is the opposite of effective.

Any real consultation with small and medium-sized business usually has one take-away that goes along with it: If you're going to introduce a new regulation or a new tax or anything that they have to comply with, make it as easy as possible to understand and to comply with. What I don't think this government understands is why that's the case. If you run a small or medium-sized business, every minute that you spend filling out paperwork is a minute that you're not spending either making a product, selling a product or providing a service to your customer. If you have an entire division of people devoted to regulatory compliance, that kind of paperwork is now their job. If you have 10 people working for you, chances are pretty good that all of them have other work that you need them to be doing and you actually can't afford to have them not doing that so they can figure out the number of production credits minus the production allowance in the target year, subject to adjustment, that you have to buy. It's a complicated scheme.

Every small and medium-sized business owner I've ever talked to hates bills. The only thing they hate more is the paperwork. Hating bills is easy to understand: It's money going out. Usually, it's a product of money coming in. You had to order stuff or subscribe to new services because your business is growing and you need to provide service or product to customers. Paperwork isn't a product of money coming in; it's money going out and it's time going out, as well.

Complication is the enemy of effectiveness. If what you want is an effective system here in Ontario—and I want to point out that I started this by saying that we all want to do something to save the environment—a complicated system is less likely to be an effective one. Years of creating government regulation should tell us that. In fact, the government has admitted in briefings that it doesn't know how many people it will have to hire to administer cap-and-trade or what the costs will be to administer it. Given that we're talking about the most indebted subnational jurisdiction on the planet, it strikes me as unwise to cut them a blank cheque for an unaccountable program that many doubt will do anything to actually cut greenhouse gas emissions. But we know how much this government likes to create and increase the size of bureaucracy.

I'd like to quote from something that a former member of this House had to say about cap-and-trade in this regard. We've heard this a few times now, but I'd like to say it again: "Cap-and-trade requires a very significant bureaucracy. And this government has a very large

bureaucracy. The last thing it needs is to add hundreds of people to the offices around Queen's Park to deal with cap-and-trade." That was said by a constituent of mine—at least a part-time constituent of mine: former Liberal finance minister Greg Sorbara.

Sorbara was similarly critical about whether cap-and-trade would actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions, saying, "There's no evidence, anywhere in the world, that" cap-and-trade "actually does work to significantly reduce carbon emissions."

So what the government is giving Ontarians, at the end of the day, is a needlessly complicated program that has the potential to be ruinously expensive and not effectively fight climate change. Fighting climate change requires a free market solution, and what the government has given the people of Ontario is a fake market solution. It's created a program that is meant to deliver headlines and not results. It's created a program that it knows has the potential to be rife with abuse, and what's more, it's done it knowing that the EU emissions trading system was just audited and a \$5-billion tax fraud was found there.

All of this is the result of putting in place a system where emissions become too difficult to track. How many credits a company is or isn't supposed to buy is subject to an algebraic equation that would stump some professors, and the government gets to decide who the rules apply to and who they don't. Tragically, the most disappointing thing about this is how unsurprising this whole thing is.

It's not the first time that we've seen the government use money that is dedicated to do a specific purpose on pretty much whatever it wants. I go back to where I started: I believe that we all want to do something to help the environment. I do not believe that cap-and-trade will in any way accomplish that. As I alluded to earlier, we've seen this movie before, with the health premium. The money has to be dedicated to go where it will be used to have the effect that it's intended to have. Otherwise, health premium money, which was supposed to go to save our health care system, ends up paying for cancelled gas plants. It ends up paying for Ornge scandals. It ends up paying for all kinds of scandal and abuse.

If you are going to create this program, create it properly, with a dedicated fund, so you have the intended results from it. Cap-and-trade should have its own place, its own pool of money so that we can actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Ms. Catherine Fife: While the member from Prince Edward—Hastings and I don't agree on cap-and-trade as a whole, I think we share some concerns around the complexity of this plan that the government has brought forward. I think that he makes a good point in that the more complex, the more complicated a plan or a scheme—he used the word "scheme"—is, then the less likely that you're going to have buy-in. This is human nature, more than anything.

And we have seen some missteps. When the government first made their announcement around the retrofit—the \$100 million—they only connected Enbridge and Union Gas, not understanding or not knowing that the city of Kitchener is not served by Union Gas or Enbridge and that parts of Kingston are not served by Enbridge or Union Gas. Yesterday, even the Minister of Energy, when we asked how people who are on propane or on diesel are going to be part of this plan, said that Enbridge and Union Gas are going to take care of it.

Well, if you don't have a relationship with the company Enbridge and you don't have a relationship with the company Union Gas, what does that look like for you? As a farmer, for instance, on diesel or a farmer—farmers are going to propane more and more, because they want off the grid. There are so many people in this province—and companies, quite honestly—that want off the grid because this government has made energy so expensive that it's cost-prohibitive. So they're actually finding their own solutions.

The point that the member from Prince Edward–Hastings has made is that there have already been some missteps, so there's already a confidence issue, which lends itself to not having credibility, which will affect buy-in, which will affect climate change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure to join this wonderful debate. I think we can all agree that the environment is something very important.

I'm replacing a member for Ottawa-Orléans, Mr. Phil McNeely, who retired firmly believing that the environment was something that we needed to address. For all the years that he was in our riding representing me at Queen's Park, I was very happy that he was that voice for us in Ottawa-Orléans.

I'm a little bit, I would say, surprised or curious, because from this side of the House suddenly carbon pricing is a good thing. One thing that I remember that their leader said on Saturday during their convention was that every single decision would be made from the grassroots, and they would send an email out to all the people of Ontario to develop their policy.

What if the people of Ontario would say to that leader that, actually, cap-and-trade is a good thing? I just want to remind everyone at home who is listening to these wonderful debates that I think we collectively—maybe for a few, no. But I would say we all agree that climate change is something we need to tackle. What we're proposing is making the polluters pay.

1710

I know there was some issue regarding the fact about where the money will go and all this. We were very transparent in announcing our Green Investment Fund. What I like to say to people is that every single dollar that will be achieved while we're reducing the GHG in our province will be reinvested for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise on behalf of the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, because, actually, they're fed up with this government. They've heard them for 12 years, they see their plans and—I commend the member from Kitchener–Waterloo when she talks about people in her riding having trouble. What do they get? They get an answer: "Well, the poor people can apply for a grant." Yes, \$2 a month, \$24 a year. The price of electricity went up 100 bucks just two months ago. What planet are they living on?

I see them talk about Phil McNeely, a member of this House; he was always a proud engineer. I remember when I first got here—the summer before, the Professional Engineers of Ontario did a scathing report on the Green Energy Act, talking about why it was technically going to fail. And they ignored it. It wasn't us saying this; it was members of the profession that actually designed the system saying this would not work. You can't generate energy without someplace to put it. And what have we seen? Billions—not millions—of dollars wasted that should have gone back to help out the people of Ontario. But, no, there's no money for the people of Ontario.

Then this green energy or this fund they're talking about—let's be serious. The cap-and-trade system has been tried many places in the world and it's failed miserably. That's what our leader said he didn't support. He didn't support cap-and-trade. We support pricing on carbon and to look after the polluters that are polluting. But we must look after the businesses and the people who need these jobs. Under this government, there are more and more poor people all the time; unfortunately, there's not more and more money to help these people. This government's own direction or policies have made more people poor in this province.

It's time to move them out and let somebody else take over to run this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It really is incredibly important to take part in this debate. I'm really honored to be here today to hopefully represent a generation that has dedicated their lives to advancing the issue of climate change and to turning governments around, turning economies around toward a more sustainable and regenerative type of economy, a resilient economy. These are things that I think are becoming more commonplace.

What I think we're hearing as a common theme in today's debate is a question around the use of the proceeds of the greenhouse gas reduction account. I have yet to hear from any government member or any minister as to specifically how we can be assured that the money that goes into the accounts, into the identified account in the bill, will not be swapped out for items that have already been budgeted. For instance, the criteria within the account and the accounting are so abstract that there is no guarantee that any of the cap-and-trade revenue will deliver meaningful, independently verifiable greenhouse gas reductions. For example, the money could be used to

subsidize 90%-empty diesel trains on the Union Pearson Express line. There's one really simple example that I would love to hear a government member explain to us. We know you've already allocated funds for the UP Express line. How is it that the money that goes into the cap-and-trade revenue stream won't be used to subsidize that? Because we know you've already used it. We know you've already budgeted and allocated it for us.

So there's a really basic example. Please, members of the government, answer that question for us in the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, two minutes.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you to my colleagues from all parties who have chimed in on my remarks: the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Essex from the third party; and the member from Ottawa–Orléans, who spent most of her time actually talking about our leader. I think that's probably because she doesn't want to talk about her own leader. If you had approval ratings like the Premier currently has, I wouldn't want to talk about her either. I almost wouldn't want to even mention who our leader is, if I was on that side of the House over there. The approval ratings are not very good at all.

You know what? Nobody addressed—from the government, anyway—the comments made by their former colleague, one of their party leaders, one of the top, top people in the party, Mr. Greg Sorbara, when he was on The Agenda and spoke about what this cap-and-trade is all about. This is one of their own saying this. This isn't Jack Mintz or some expert from outside of politics. This is a former leader in that party, Greg Sorbara, talking about the fact that all this is is an opportunity to build more bureaucracy and grab cash, because we know that this Liberal Party, this government, is starving for more cash that they can spend on their pet projects.

I would also like to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and my colleague from eastern Ontario. He was talking about the fact that the policies of this government continue to make it more expensive to live in Ontario. The policies of this government are creating more poor people. The policies of this government are driving up the cost of energy. They're driving up the cost of living.

We really do need a change of government in 2018, and we're going to get one with Patrick Brown as the new Premier of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: As always, I'm pleased to be able to rise today and speak to Bill 172.

Speaker, as you and all the members of this House know, I and the Ontario NDP support cap-and-trade. We understand that without a concerted effort from municipal, provincial and federal governments, as well as many partners, climate change will continue to get worse.

New Democrats understand that if we're going to ensure that the planet we inherited from our parents and our grandparents is the same one we'll leave to our children and grandchildren, then now is the time for action. Bold, effective action is needed now.

In my riding of Niagara Falls, in Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, our economy is driven in large part by two main sectors: tourism and agriculture. Of course, both of these sectors of our economy can be heavily impacted by climate change.

According to a 2012 report released by the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre at Brock University, entitled Adapting to Climate Change: Challenges for Niagara, our region can expect to see—listen to this—a 20% decrease in summer rainfall by 2050 and a three- to four-degree temperature increase. The growth in the conditions that give rise to thunderstorms, with a likely increase in heavy rains, lightning strikes, high winds, and hail storms, would have a serious impact on agriculture in Niagara and the jobs that they create. A decrease in summer rainfall combined with an increase in temperature and an increased condition for heavy rain and thunderstorms sounds to me like the conditions necessary for droughts and floods, not for sustainable agriculture.

The report goes on to say that farmers in the Niagara region can also expect more negative impacts. They should expect shorter growing seasons for Niagara's ice wine. Think about that. They should expect an increase in invasive weed species and agricultural pests. They should expect increased crop damage from unpredictable freezing rain and freeze-thaw cycles. The report also mentions that greenhouse operators should expect increased cooling requirements and energy costs to run their greenhouses. That is a serious issue. My riding has already seen some greenhouse operators forced to relocate to the United States because of the rising cost of power. Now, with a fire sale of Hydro One proceeding against the wishes of 85% of Ontarians and the effects of climate change, this is only going to get worse for my riding.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, and the New Democrats support a cap-and-trade system in Ontario. We want to see a cap-and-trade system put in place that is fair, that is effective and that is transparent. Unfortunately, in the bill before us today, the cap-and-trade system that is outlined falls short of these goals. Once again, we have a bill before us that makes for great messaging and photo opportunities and that will sound great at the doorsteps, but that falls short on critical measures that would make it fair, effective, and transparent.

I would like to take a moment to discuss exactly how the bill falls short in each of these particular areas. Let's start by talking about whether or not this version of capand-trade is fair for all Ontarians.

I think a good place to start is by defining what I mean when I say "fair." The Ontario NDP believes that any cap-and-trade system that is enacted in our province must not put undue burden on low-income Ontarians or Ontarians with little control over their emissions. The people of northern Ontario, the people who live in our rural communities, the people who don't have transit or clean energy: Those are the people we must ensure are not

forced to pay undue shares in this plan. Rather than forcing these people to pay more, the government should be working with them to reduce their carbon footprint, to make sure they can get to clean energy and technology, and to help them financially as they transition into a green economy.

Instead, the Liberals are telling the people of northern Ontario that they will have to pay an additional 4.3 cents per litre of gasoline while the biggest polluters in our province get a four-year holiday from the cap-and-trade plan. I don't believe—and I don't believe anyone in this chamber would say—that that's fair for the people of northern Ontario or the people that live in rural communities. It's not fair to the people who have no other option than to drive their cars. So this cap-and-trade plan before us today fails the question of fairness.

What about the question of effectiveness? Is this capand-trade plan going to be effective?

Well, 10 years ago, the Quebec government announced its climate change action plan to much fanfare. Their plan included more tools to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions than the plan we see before us today. And did it work? Unfortunately, the answer is that it didn't work as they had expected. Instead of hitting the targets they set for themselves, they were only able to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by about 10% of the original goal. What does that mean for us? It means that we're not off to a very good start.

Mr. Speaker, the plan we see before us today promises even greater reductions in greenhouse gas emissions than the Quebec plan did. It promises even greater reductions but provides few tools to enable that to happen. It promises greater reductions but has no targets attached to the \$325-million worth of programs that are supposed to be funded from the cap-and-trade revenue.

This is a critical point. The government is committed to investing \$325 million from cap-and-trade revenues into the program to help reduce greenhouse gases. There are some decent proposals among those programs, but the problem is that none of those programs have targets for reductions attached to them. How can the government expect measures to be effective or not in a given program when they haven't even set what the goal of that program is to begin with?

So is this plan effective? Well, the truth is that only time will answer that question in full. But so far, the signs do not look good.

The Ontario NDP and our leader, Andrea Horwath, know that if this plan is going to stand up to public scrutiny, and if this plan is going to actually work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the money from this plan needs to go into a separate account for greenhouse gas reductions. That account needs to be separately and transparently audited, and it needs to be directly connected to targeted, measurable and independently verifiable greenhouse gas reductions.

Unfortunately, the plan before us today falls short of that standard. The plan before us today is not transparent,

it's not fair to the people of Ontario and there are many signs that point to it not being effective.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I just want to pass on a couple of words, if I may. I had the opportunity this year to be in a number of countries, and Italy was one of them, but in particular I was at the Vatican for about four days. We had the good fortune to sit very, very close to the Pope through some miracle, I guess. I have to tell you that, during that time, Pope Francis was addressing his papal encyclical. There were also other particular people there and there were people there from the United Nations one guest speaker who spoke on behalf of the world to the congregation. There were probably only a couple of hundred or thousand people there. There were not that many that day. But I have to tell you, what happened that day is he made a statement. It was the very same statement that Premier Wynne and Minister Murray, our Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, have been talking about and it's being accepted worldwide. It doesn't seem to be accepted to a large extent in this

I want to read to you the appeal of Pope Francis—just a couple of sentences: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environment crisis and the sufferings of the excluded."

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: There seems to be some question on the other side of the House, so let me repeat what I had said earlier about Bill 172.

Speaker, this is nothing more than a cash grab from the Liberal Party, looking for \$1.9 billion. If anybody has any question about that, all they have to do is look at the budget. That \$1.9 billion is put right into general revenue.

They can continue to pretend what the money is used for, but we all know because they did the same thing with the Hydro sale when they took the money and, in Bill 144, allowed themselves to reimburse themselves for monies already spent on transit and infrastructure. That's why they were able to say, "We're going to use the Hydro funds for transit and infrastructure." They did, but

then they took the money already budgeted out. They're doing exactly the same thing again.

They put a clause in this bill. All 55 pages are a lot of words, except the real sentence we need to realize just exactly what they did. The Hydro One sentence was buried: "to reimburse the crown for expenditures incurred by the crown, directly or indirectly for any purpose described in paragraph 2." Paragraph 2 sends you to schedule 1, and schedule 1, on page 55, is very clear that the things they can reimburse themselves for are "public transit vehicles and infrastructure that reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

Now, I know they don't like that. They got caught again doing this. This is exactly what they tried to do: pull the wool over everyone's eyes on the Hydro One sale. It didn't work. The Financial Accountability Officer caught them then, and it caught them already on this one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Along the same lines as my colleague, the member from Nipissing: We've asked this question tonight in this debate several times and we've yet to hear a definitive answer from the government. I gather that we're going to have to move on.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Don't give up, Taras. Don't give up.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Well, you know what? We already know the answer, obviously. They are conspicuous in their reluctance to give us an answer on that.

In December, roughly 190 countries signed on to the Paris climate accord to limit their greenhouse gas emissions to the aspirational goal of no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. If we are to do that—what that number equates to in terms of how much fossil fuel we can't burn—it actually equates to about 80% of the known fossil fuel reserves on the planet, which already make up a massive portion of the balance sheet of companies, of nation states, of royalties that are already banked on.

The value of that asset, which would then have to be a stranded asset—again, if we are not to exceed the 1.5- or 2-degree threshold—is roughly \$50 trillion. To put this into perspective, the financial collapse of 2008 was a global economic catastrophe that is valued at around \$11 trillion. Multiply that by about five or six times conservatively, Speaker. This is the enormity of the situation that we're dealing with.

We have to have substance in our policies—effectiveness, clarity and fairness—or else we're going to get it wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I've heard members around the House, mostly from the other side, saying that this bill is going to cost people money. Well, I have to say that climate change is already costing the people of Ontario. It has devastated communities. It has damaged homes, infrastructure, businesses and crops, and increased insurance rates. It also costs more for any kind of vegetables or fruits that are imported. California used to

be the breadbasket of North America. The drought is so bad that we don't have a lot of products coming from there. When they do come, they cost a lot of money.

Ontario's cap-and-trade program will help fight against climate change by creating a carbon market that gives polluters an incentive to cut greenhouse gas emissions and develop cleaner, greener technologies. We know that cap-and-trade is the right thing to do for our environment and for the economy. According to modelling results by EnviroEconomics, a prominent economics consultancy, cap-and-trade is expected to have a significant impact on Ontario's GDP, consistent with the experience in Quebec and California. We're not the first ones out of the gate on this, but we have to catch up.

After introducing its cap-and-trade program and putting a price on carbon, California's economy grew at a pace that exceeded the growth of the rest of the US economy. The number of jobs in California grew by almost 3.3% in the first year and a half of the program, outstripping the national rate of job creation, which was 2.5% over the same period.

Ontario is well positioned to seize the opportunities of a low-carbon economy if we are prepared to take this bold action. I urge you to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Niagara Falls has two minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I guess one thing that has really come out over the last few hours is the \$1.9-billion slush fund. It has been asked by us and asked by the PCs, so I'm going to ask one of the members from the opposition, from Ottawa South, who's a relatively honest gentleman. Maybe he could give us an answer at some point in time. Maybe he'll give us an answer. Just putting it out there.

Mr. John Fraser: Relatively?

Mr. Wayne Gates: You shouldn't turn red on that; that's a compliment.

I want to finish up by saying that climate change is real. We have a situation today where our food supply is being threatened. It's in jeopardy. I've always said, not just in this House but for a long time, that if you're a country that can't feed itself, you're a country that's going to be in trouble.

I want to say to everybody, thank you very much for your comments. I think we have to get this right. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Our kids, our grand-kids and the future of the planet are relying on every country around the world to get it right, and we have to get it right here. Thank you very much for a few minutes of your time. I appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and to add my remarks to the debate of Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016.

Lake Erie is my personal favourite of all the Great Lakes. There's a reason for that. It should come as no surprise, as my riding is located on its spectacular north shore. Early on in my political career, the lake that I had so often enjoyed as a youngster became a massive issue.

The year: 2012. The weekend: Labour Day. A massive fish kill occurred along the shores of Lake Erie in the Rondeau area over that Labour Day weekend. The impacted species included bottom feeders such as sheepshead, catfish, carp, perch and suckers. All told, thousands of fish died, and the affected area stretched roughly 40 kilometres.

Initially it was believed to have been caused by natural causes such as lake inversion. This occurs when the colder, low-oxygen water is stirred up. However, concerned first and foremost with the health and safety of my constituents, I pressed the Ministry of the Environment to consider all possible causes until an exact cause could be determined. If the cause was not natural, we needed to find out quickly so more fish would not be harmed and human health would not be jeopardized.

To his credit, the member for St. Catharines, who was the Minister of the Environment at that time, kept me in the loop and took the concerns of both myself and my community seriously. Now, events like these demonstrate just how important our environment and the Great Lakes specifically are to all Ontarians. Quite simply, we rely on our environment to live.

All this is to say that I've had a lifelong appreciation for the unique environment that we enjoy here in Ontario, especially the beautiful shorelines of the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex. Working to protect the environment is something I learned early on as an MPP. That's why I'm proud of the fact that our party is also committing to bold action when it comes to tackling the challenge of climate change and protecting that which we love dearly; that is, the environment.

We want to do it in such a way that we will not see government reaching its hand into the wallets of each and every Ontarian, free to spend the billions generated as it sees fit with little public oversight. I've heard a lot of criticism of the government's cap-and-trade scheme in my riding.

Union Gas, which is in fact headquartered in Chatham, is a major employer in my riding. They contribute greatly to both our local economy and a number of charitable causes. They've suggested a number of measures to ease the burden for consumers. Having no interest in easing the burden for consumers, the government evidently ignored these sorts of causes for concern.

The following is taken from a Union Gas release expressing concerns over the Liberal cap-and-trade plan:

"According to ICF International ... there will be an immediate impact on natural gas and gasoline costs for households and businesses that will grow over time:

"—Households: about \$160 a year in 2017, increasing to over \$850 by 2030;

"—small businesses" can expect this year "about \$170,000 a year ... increasing to over \$900,000 by 2030;

"—and there will be added costs for necessities like food which rely on carbon-based energy for their production and distribution." But Union Gas also likes to present a very fair, sound, balanced approach, so therefore, they raised some suggestions as well. Here's what they say: "Initial cost-free allowances for natural gas distributors and a slight delay to 2018 for implementation, similar to what was done in California and Quebec, will give consumers time to better understand the changes and to make the behavioural adjustments necessary for the government's new emission reduction measures to begin to have an effect."

Here's what Steve Baker, president of Union Gas, went on to say: "We hope to work constructively with the provincial government toward a final framework that will help achieve our environmental goals without sacrificing the social and economic well-being of the province." That's exactly what I want to see as well.

I do feel it's noteworthy and worth celebrating that all three parties have agreed that climate change—or changes in climate—is real and we need to come together to do something about it. It's something that I assume the government would be happy to see, but instead, they're more focused on playing political games.

We know why they want to talk about anything other than their own record in power: The Liberal government has an awful track record when it comes to accountability and transparency. The Liberal government wants to make money off climate change because they have run our province's finances right into the ground.

They want to spend the \$1.9 billion their plan will generate as they see fit, without opening the doors wide to basic and necessary public scrutiny. Have they earned the trust? I'd say that no government ever deserves the blind trust that the Ontario Liberals are demanding, especially when it comes to billions of dollars. So let's see if they've earned the benefit of doubt when it comes to these sorts of things.

Well, you can look at the case of Drive Clean, which is legally forbidden from generating a profit for the government. The Liberals said it would not generate a profit. The law said it was not allowed to generate a profit. The program could not generate more than it cost. That seems pretty clear to me. But guess what happened? The Liberals ignored the law, or simply didn't notice it was broken, and the program pulled in millions of dollars more than it cost.

We've seen, through the billions squandered on eHealth and Ornge scandals, what this government is capable of when money is spent without any oversight. Who can forget the time when the Liberals created a health tax to support health care, and then just put the money into general revenue?

Let's look at how truthful they've been in the past when it comes to telling Ontarians how much things will cost. Remember, this is the same government, Speaker, who had numerous members stand in the Legislature and say—through their teeth, I imagine—that cancelled gas plants would only cost Ontario \$40 million. I was in estimates when myself and two of my colleagues challenged the then Minister of Finance, and that's what he said. They were only slightly off with their estimates,

and as we all know, the final bill came in at over \$1 billion. A lot of people have trouble putting such a large number into perspective, so you could almost say that it ended up costing a few times more than the average Ontario winter hydro bill. Keep that in mind when you hear the Liberals tell you that there's barely going to be an impact on your wallet with their latest scheme. We've all heard that one before. The same government that said that cancelling the gas plants will only cost \$40 million, when it actually cost taxpayers \$1 billion, is now saying their plan will only cause the price of gas to go up by 4.3 cents per litre. Anybody still believe it?

In my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, my constituents are very concerned about a hike in gas prices, as the distance they have to travel requires them to move by car. That's the transit system in rural Ontario. The Chatham–Kent Chamber of Commerce raised this concern, stating, "Given our unique geographic size, driving to and from work is a necessity and not a luxury. We do not have a mass transit infrastructure. We are being penalized as a result of our geographic makeup. Any increase to gasoline prices is going to be felt throughout the local economy, including the cost of food at our grocery store and especially with produce."

I cannot support a plan that makes life more expensive for my constituents without corresponding tax cuts for individuals or businesses. We need a revenue-neutral carbon price with transparent and independent oversight to ensure there are actually results in emission reductions with steps to ease the financial impact on citizens. Speaker, the Liberal plan is none of those things.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Smith): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks to the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, who, again, raised many of the concerns we've heard all night here but have yet to have answered in a substantive way by any member of the government benches. These are real, pressing concerns and legitimate concerns that people—again, don't take it from us, which I think is what the member has said. Take it from the people in our communities who are expressing reservation, some hesitation and cynicism around how the Liberal government can initiate a plan, given their absolute failure and ineptitude to deliver real results on all other scopes and schemes that we've seen come through this House. Their financial and fiscal responsibility has been lacklustre, at best. It has harmed regional economies. It has picked winners and losers and left many, many Ontarians struggling. Again, there's no recognition that their policies have had anything, by their account, other than a great, great effect.

So I'll say that I'm looking for a government—especially on this issue, being so complex, so transformative—that is going to consult, going to recognize that they might not have it right the first time, as we know, as their track record should show and would clearly show. They should consult and they should take the best evidence that is put forward. When we're highlighting that revenue streams need to be directed specifically

towards reducing greenhouse gases, then give us the evidence that that is actually going to happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Smith): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, and publicly I'd say you fit the chair perfectly, Speaker. You're doing a great job.

A little bit of comment on the great member from Chatham-Kent: I want to say, not just in this 10 minutes but in general, the time spent on debate from the opposition has been a lot about—not necessarily about this bill, although a little bit—partisan politics. We talked about all sorts of different things.

I understand the role. I've said this before and I'll say it again. I understand the role of the opposition, but I would hope we would focus on the proposed legislation that we're talking about.

We get a lot of criticism when we have to put time allocation in place to get some legislation done. I hear from the opposition: "Well, we need time to debate this. Every member wants to speak about it." And then, when that opportunity is afforded the opposition, they wander way off kilter.

The other piece that I would hope, when we're debating a piece of legislation—yes, be critical about things that you feel strongly about, and I said that a number of times, but give us some concrete ideas of where you think it should go. I don't hear any of that. I just hear about criticism.

Frankly, I don't blame them for not giving us any suggestions because I think that's pretty hollow on the other side. They can't make up their minds. One day they support it, and another day they don't. But I would say that before you stand up and debate, please give us some real, strong ideas on how to make things better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Todd Smith): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I listened to the debate and then the comments and I have to just say, I guess the member from Northumberland—Quinte West was sleeping for the afternoon and woke up and didn't know where he was. He started going on that our party was not talking about the bill. Of course, that's all we've been talking about. Then he launched into the fact that we were being partisan and we're not offering up solutions.

The member from Northumberland—Quinte West ought to take a look at the standing orders and understand what debate is all about and what the role of the opposition party is. It's to be critical and to hold the government to account. Before you go to sleep next time, get the standing orders out, do some reading and see what debate is all about.

I will say that this bill does pick winners. The member from Essex said that it picks winners and losers. I want to say to you, Speaker, this bill picks winners and creates losers. That's what this bill is doing. It's a \$1.9-billion grab. As I explained yesterday, we keep squeezing the people in this province. We keep raising the cost of living

and reducing our growth. I gave those numbers yesterday to everyone in the House. They're in the budget. It's very simple to see that prosperity has been flat, something like the member from Northumberland–Quinte West's comment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We need to recognize, all of us, that there needs to be something done for what's going on in our environment and what those emissions do in harming our environment.

I just want to point out to those who may still be skeptical: Look at what happened in the town of Sudbury back in the 1970s. It was essentially where, in the 1960s, you went in order to practise moonwalking. Why? The Apollo program went there because Sudbury looked like the top of the moon. Essentially, it was devastated by acid rain and what was coming out of the emissions of those smelters that, quite frankly, killed all the vegetation for miles around the city of Sudbury.

The government of the day, federally and provincially, and the American government, entered into an agreement in order to be able to deal with acid rain and those types of emissions—as we call them, NO_x and SO_x —and put in place a type of cap-and-trade system—more cap than trade—that essentially set limits to what we were able to discharge into the atmosphere.

As a result, when you look at Sudbury today, it is like night and day. Sudbury is a green city. You would never know it, if you looked at a picture of Sudbury from the 1960s when the Apollo astronauts went out there to practise walking on the moon, if you looked at that picture of those astronauts like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Conrad and others who stood in Sudbury, practising walking on the moon because it looked like a moonscape environment.

If you were to bring those astronauts back, they would think, "My God, where are we? We have gone to a new planet. It's green. It's wonderful. It's changed." And why? Because we decided, as a society, that there was a necessity to do this, that we needed to make sure that we protect our environment. At the end of the day, it has not been a negative drain on the economy; it's been positive for the city of Sudbury and the area. What we have done when it comes to acid rain is essentially to deal with what was a tragedy and turn it into a real victory.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I would like to thank the members from Essex, Northumberland–Quinte West, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and, of course, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

The member from Essex talked about people and their reservations and their cynicism. Quite frankly, we on this side of the House understand that. We understand the fact that people are somewhat cynical and have some strong reservations. It's kind of like fool me once, shame on you, but fool me twice, shame on me.

The Northumberland—Quinte West member—first of all, he's a great judge of character. He was talking about

the time allocation and rushing through. Well, we feel that they're rushing through without proper consultation, other than maybe touching base with a gentleman by the name of Al Gore.

Again, one of the things that I'm concerned about as well is the fact that they don't tell us what the impact is. We need the finer details. We need more details, because they don't tell us what's the impact on—and I was listening to the member from Niagara Falls, because I know he has strong union affiliations and I respect that. So what's the impact going to be on the automotive industry? What's the impact going to be on the tire manufacturers? What's the impact going to be on the steel industry? Because, again, they have large carbon footprints. What are they going to do?

Of course, we have heard about Marchionne, the chief executive officer of Fiat Chrysler, and he's got some very serious concerns about that as well.

This government may be picking winners and losers—who will have to pay and who will not have to pay—in our opinion. That's not fair, because ultimately what happens is that it's the consumer who is going to be paying more because of the fact that these companies will have to pay big bucks for their carbon footprint.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. *Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being one minute to six, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud– Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London -Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington-Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia -Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket-Aurora	Departy Speaker / 1100 president
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	-
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernment
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest- Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism
		Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale-High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity-Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de
		l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	l'Infrastructure

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor-Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering-Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
	Centre-Nord	Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	1
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches-East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea Gore-Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre
V-L-L1' I I (DC)	D () Y' () T	Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor

Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo Han Dong, Michael Harris Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith

Monique Taylor

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn

Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson

Mike Colle, Grant Crack Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon

Lisa M. Thompson

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins

Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon John Fraser, Wayne Gates

Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi

Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri

Laurie Scott

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren

Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon

Chris Ballard, Steve Clark Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod

Han Dong, John Fraser

Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi Julia Munro, Arthur Potts

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French

Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat

Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker

Jeff Yurek

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh

Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns

Glenn Thibeault

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Mr. Wayne Gates8005

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn8006

Health care

Ms. Catherine Fife	8006
Mr. Todd Smith	8006
Ms. Catherine Fife	8008
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	8008
Mr. Jim McDonell	8009
Mr. Taras Natyshak	8009
Mr. Todd Smith	8009
Mr. Wayne Gates	8009
Mr. Joe Dickson	8011
Mr. Victor Fedeli	8011
Mr. Taras Natyshak	8011
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	8011
Mr. Wayne Gates	
Mr. Rick Nicholls	8012
Mr. Taras Natyshak	8013
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	8014
Mr. Randy Hillier	8014
Mr. Gilles Bisson	
Mr. Rick Nicholls	
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	8015

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 9 March 2016 / Mercredi 9 mars 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR		Health care funding	
		Mr. Patrick Brown	7977
2016 Ontario budget / Budget de l'Ontario		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7977
Ms. Andrea Horwath		Hon. Eric Hoskins	7977
Ms. Catherine Fife		Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
Hon. David Orazietti	7969	Ms. Andrea Horwath	7978
Debate deemed adjourned	7971	Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7978
		Northern health services	
INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS	/	Ms. Andrea Horwath	7979
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUR	S	Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7979
Martin Martani	7071	Hon. Eric Hoskins	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod		Electoral reform	
Mr. Paul Miller		Mr. Bill Walker	7980
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	
Mrs. Gila Martow		Collective bargaining	
Mr. Gilles Bisson		Ms. Cindy Forster	7980
Mr. Grant Crack		Hon. Charles Sousa	
Mr. Bill Walker		Ontario Retirement Pension Plan	
Ms. Cindy Forster		Ms. Sophie Kiwala	7981
Hon. James J. Bradley		Hon. Mitzie Hunter	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson		Collective bargaining	
Hon. Liz Sandals		Ms. Lisa MacLeod	7982
Hon. Yasir Naqvi		Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman		Mining industry	
Hon. Reza Moridi		Mr. Michael Mantha	7982
Mr. Jim McDonell		Hon. Michael Gravelle	
Mr. Harinder S. Takhar		Ontario film and television industry	
Mr. Han Dong		Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	7983
Hon. Eric Hoskins		Hon. Michael Coteau	
Mr. Granville Anderson		Municipalities	
Hon. Bill Mauro		Mr. Randy Pettapiece	7984
Hon. Yasir Naqvi		Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	
Hon. Michael Coteau		Aboriginal health care	
Hon. Michael Gravelle		Mme France Gélinas	7984
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7972	Hon. Eric Hoskins	
Lorne Maeck		Seniors	
Mr. Taras Natyshak		Mr. Joe Dickson	7985
Hon. James J. Bradley		Hon. Mario Sergio	
Mr. Norm Miller		Animal protection	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7976	Mr. Rick Nicholls	7986
		Hon. Yasir Naqvi	
ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS OR	ALES	Visitors	
Convectional facilities		Ms. Soo Wong	7986
Correctional facilities	7076	Mr. Rick Nicholls	
Mr. Patrick Brown			
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Continue	da haal-
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	/9//	Continued on insid	he back cover



ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 10 March 2016

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 10 mars 2016



Président L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière Deborah Deller

Speaker Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building 111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430 Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario





Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement 111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park (Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430 Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 9, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West. In particular today, I am honoured to join in this very critical debate about the government's Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. Certainly, this is an issue that is vital to my community. It's vital to the 107 ridings that we represent in this chamber. It's vital to Legislatures across this country and around the world.

In London, there was a city council report that looked at infrastructure needs and the vulnerability of infrastructure to climate change. That report noted that in the last 30 years London has had five severe flooding occurrences: in March 1977, September 1986, July 2000 and then twice in 2008, in April and December. The report said that climate modeling based on more up-to-date rainfall events and patterns suggests the city of London can expect to experience more frequent and severe precipitation events in the future which may seriously impact various public infrastructures.

So there are costs associated with not addressing climate change. The costs go beyond economic. They are, obviously, environmental; they're also political. Speaker, the decisions that we make on this bill are going to be far-reaching in terms of their implication, so we need to get this bill right.

I want to state at the outset that New Democrats unequivocally support a cap-and-trade system. We recognize the urgency of taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the urgency of moving to a low-carbon economy. Climate change is real, Speaker, and the consequences of inaction are devastating. The stakes are too high to play around with half measures or to put a plan in place that doesn't have the buy-in necessary to truly make a difference. We've already seen how this government's failure to listen to expert advice, to heed the warnings that have been sounded, has undermined environmental initiatives in the past. We can't afford another green energy debacle. It tainted the whole notion of green economy. It made people cynical about the government's motivations in moving ahead. Instead of a collective commitment to promote sustainable development, to support environmental responsibility and ecological stewardship, people are starting to look at government legislation as simply greenwashing. That's why New Democrats have been insisting that the cap-and-trade system that is established by this bill is fair, effective and transparent.

What do we mean by each of these tenets?

By fairness, we mean that we need legislation that will unify Ontarians, not divide them. There is nothing that divides people more than the feeling that some are being asked to contribute more than their fair share while others are getting a free ride. New Democrats want assurances that the cap-and-trade system will not disproportionately affect low-income Ontarians. They already pay a much greater share of their income in home heating and gas for their vehicles, so we want assurances that low-income Ontarians won't be disadvantaged.

In addition, we don't want to see people who live in remote and northern communities across the province disadvantaged by the system. Northerners and people who live in rural communities don't have the same options as those of us who live in southern Ontario to reduce carbon emissions. They don't have access to transit. They wish they had access to transit, but they don't have any other choice but to use their vehicles to get around. So they are limited in their ability to reduce carbon emissions. The same thing goes for those who live in rental apartments. They don't have the ability to turn down their thermostat or replace their windows with energy-efficient upgrades.

So the impact on renters, on low-income people, on northerners and on those who live in remote and rural communities will be much greater, and we need to ensure that there are some mitigation measures put in place so that these people don't disproportionately carry the burden of moving to a low-carbon economy.

Does this mean that we shouldn't increase costs for gas and heating? No, it doesn't. But what we do need to do is look at ways to mitigate the impact of these costs. This is what is being done in BC, it is what has been done in California and it's what is going to be done in

Alberta. We know that in BC there is a special rebate for low-income families. California requires that at least 25% of cap-and-trade revenues are spent on programs that benefit disadvantaged communities, and Alberta's new plan includes a consumer rebate that will offset the impact of carbon pricing on most households in the bottom 60% of income across that province.

New Democrats are not the only ones who are calling for measures to share the burden fairly to help low-income Ontarians be part of the solution. The Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Clean Economy Alliance have also urged the government to include requirements that revenue from the cap-and-trade program be used to counteract the impact of the program on low-income communities. In spite of what the government has heard from organizations like the Canadian Environmental Law Association and the Clean Economy Alliance, the Ontario government's proposed system does not recognize fairness as one of the fundamental principles that need to be in place for an effective cap-and-trade system.

I now want to turn to transparency, which is the second key tenet of any effective program of cap-and-trade. The government says that the revenues that are generated by the cap-and-trade system will be dedicated to climate change action. However, we understand that the money is going to flow into general revenue. The greenhouse gas reduction account that the government is setting up is not a separate, special-purpose account at all; it is an accounting procedure. The rules are flexible, as the Financial Accountability Officer has pointed out. The government can basically spend the money that is put into the account on anything it wants, including deficit reduction. There's no guarantee that cap-and-trade revenues are going to increase overall funding for climate change action, no commitment to record money in/money out. The balance of the account can be spent on programs that are either directly or indirectly related to greenhouse gas emissions, but there are no guidelines about what this actually means and no firm restrictions on how that money can be spent.

0910

New Democrats are calling for the money to flow into a separate account that is separately and transparently audited and directly connected to targeted, measurable and independently verifiable greenhouse gas reductions. We want to see the revenues that are generated used to actually help mitigate the effects of climate change and bring about some of that fairness I talked about earlier. This cannot be done if the government is unwilling to open the books and tie this funding to evidence and to require tangible results.

Finally, but of course most importantly, is the tenet of effectiveness. That is the third of what we see as the absolute fundamental preconditions for a cap-and-trade system. Because what good is the bill if it is not effective in actually reducing emissions? The way that the program is set up in this legislation is with as little oversight as possible. The system is delegated to an unaccountable pri-

vate corporation that is not subject to public oversight. It's not subject to the Auditor General or the Environmental Commissioner, which we, Speaker, see as unacceptable. The Financial Accountability Officer has said it is impossible to know if the revenues will actually be spent on new greenhouse gas emission reductions. The Environmental Commissioner is shut out of the legislation. She is not given access to the information and data that she would need to properly assess the system.

We need look no further than Quebec to see what can happen when a plan is announced but there is no effective oversight put in place. New Democrats want to see this system work and we are looking forward to amendments to make sure that it does.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm not sure how familiar the member is with the bill. First of all, yes, it's separately accounted for; that's a higher standard. Second, all money going in has to be recorded. All money has to be post 2014. Additional GHG reductions have to be estimated, they have to align with the action plan and they have to be specifically measurable.

No other jurisdiction in the world has that. Yes, the Auditor General will be tracking this. The Environmental Commissioner will be tracking this. Quebec just adopted our standards. Alberta and BC are planning increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Alberta is planning increases. Manitoba: The NDP government there is adopting a similar system, very similar, and we are working very closely with Premier Selinger's government. California is still trying to get to 1990 levels, which we're 6% below.

Mr. Speaker, this is a higher standard than anybody else, including New Democrats in Manitoba and Alberta. They have not had the standard. Quebec is now adapting the standards that we have. So if any member in this House has any difficulty understanding how the money is flowing, I would be glad to meet with them and take them through line by line exactly which programs are there. We are also a member of both WCI and the Compact of States and Regions, which require independent reporting, which is a higher standard than almost any other subnational government. If anyone in this House can find anyone who has a higher standard of transparency, please let me know.

As for low-income housing and low-income issues, I worked with Senator de León in California, I went down there; we're looking at their programs. Part of the design of the social housing program, which is one of the advanced pilot projects, was designed very much along the lines of California. Mr. Speaker, we've been working with the Suzuki foundation, Environmental Defence, Sustainable Prosperity, large groups. We've had David Sawyer, who is one of the best economic modellers right now, do the work. I think we need to get this to committee soon, so we can actually hear from this expertise that the opposition would like us to involve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise on behalf of my residents in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Interesting to hear the comments back and forth. I know the NDP, of course, on paper—this-cap-and-trade would set up a huge bureaucracy. Of course, huge bureaucracies are something the other two parties love. They chew up a lot of the scarce resources we have, taxpayers' money. If we're going to really share the burden fairly, this should be revenue-neutral, where the money comes back. Sure, we're talking about a price on carbon, but this should not be a tax grab. We see, contrary to over here across the floor, that the budget is very clear: It's \$1.9 billion to pay off the deficit in 2018. We don't think that's fair; we think it will hurt the economy. If you really want to benefit the people of Ontario, give that money back.

I have a small oil company in my riding; it also serves Quebec. His plea was: Stay away from cap-and-trade. There's a huge bureaucracy in his own company—lawyers, experts and consultants—and he said, "We paid a huge amount of money to California for offsets. That does not benefit anybody in Canada, when your money is leaving the country." So on top of the fact that it's not revenue-neutral—that's very clear in their own documents and in the budget—we see a big export of our own scarce dollars, and we need to do something.

It may have been a Freudian slip, but the Premier called it "crap-and-trade," and I think that's not too far from the truth. We have to get away from something that just—they tried it in Europe, and it didn't work. It was a huge bureaucracy that collapsed, with a lot of people getting into the market selling offsets that weren't really beneficial to the system. It just hasn't worked anywhere else

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: C'était très intéressant d'écouter ma collègue de London-Ouest présenter les bons côtés et les moins bons côtés du projet de loi. On est ici, vraiment, pour dire : « On appuie ce type de projet de loi. On est en faveur depuis des années, et on veut que ça vienne en Ontario. » Réduire les gaz à effet de serre, c'est un projet de société, c'est un projet de générations. Il faut prendre le premier pas. Je vous dirais que le premier pas aurait dû être pris il y a plusieurs années.

Mais, ça étant dit, il faut s'assurer que le projet de loi qu'on met de l'avant va donner des résultats. On voit, dans d'autres juridictions—puis elle a donné les exemples au Québec—où, bien qu'ils ont mis en place un système semblable au nôtre, on n'a pas vu de réduction dans les gaz à effet de serre. Donc, on veut que ça donne des résultats. Dans un deuxième temps, on veut que ça soit juste.

Moi et mon collègue devant moi, on représente des communautés du Nord. On sait tous que, dans les communautés du Nord, oui, on utilise plus d'essence parce que les distances sont plus grandes et les transports en commun n'existent pas. Dans un deuxième temps, oui, il faut chauffer nos maisons plus longtemps et un peu plus. Je suis à Toronto en ce moment. Il fait beau. Hier, les gens mangeaient dehors sur des patios. Chez nous, il y a quatre pieds de neige. Il n'y en a pas de patios ouverts. Ils n'ouvriront pas pour plusieurs mois. Il va falloir continuer à chauffer nos maisons.

Donc, vous pouvez voir que, quand on parle de justice, si les gens du Nord finissent par payer plus parce qu'ils n'ont pas le choix, les gens vont se révolter contre ça. Il faut prendre en compte l'aspect humain de nos projets de loi, et ça, ça veut dire justice.

Dans un dernier temps : la transparence. Quand il y a 1,9 milliard de dollars qui vont rentrer dans les coffres du gouvernement, il faut savoir où ça va aller.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member from London West. It's not that we haven't heard these comments before. The fairness, transparency and effectiveness approach is what I've heard from every member of that party. I know that deep down they support what we're doing, and there may be little nooks and fixes they want to make.

I have to respond to the notion we're hearing from the members of the official opposition that this is a tax, because it's not; it's a regulatory fee. We all know that regulatory fees have to be spent in a very narrow, specific way and, as we heard from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, it's all subject to the oversight of the public accounts committee and the Environmental Commissioner. So we know that we have the openness, we know that we have the transparency, and there will be fairness built into the system.

But you have to understand that the revenue-neutral concept—what BC has done—isn't working. You don't have the money to expend on targeted investments that will actually show real reductions in greenhouse gases. If you actually do the analysis of the emissions in BC, you'll find that they are rising. Where in California and Quebec emissions are declining, in BC they are rising because that process isn't working. You don't get serious, good greenhouse gas emission reductions unless you target opportunities for common, regular people to invest in hybrid cars, to invest in ground-source heat pumps and a whole bunch of others. So, revenue-neutral? No. We believe this will be revenue-positive to people who take action on climate change.

0920

It may be time we just put this to committee. Let's get the other stakeholders into the committee to start, and they can see through all the bafflegab we're getting from the other side.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for London West. You have two minutes.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member for Nickel Belt and the member for Beaches–East York for their comments on my remarks.

I just wanted to respond to the minister and point out that it is not just New Democrats who are talking about the lack of transparency. As I mentioned in my speech, the Financial Accountability Officer himself said—and I'm quoting here—"It is unclear to what extent these new revenues"—these new cap-and-trade revenues—"will be directly tied to new program spending or can be used to fund existing spending commitments." There is nothing in this legislation that ties the revenues that are generated by the cap-and-trade system to actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The other big concern, when I talked about fairness, transparency and effectiveness, is that currently the bill before us includes this exemption so that all of the largest polluters in this province get a carbon tax holiday. They don't have to pay for their carbon emissions until some undetermined date, whereas Ontario families—including those with the lowest income, including those from remote and rural communities, including those who rent apartments rather than own—all other Ontarians are being expected to start paying as early as January 1, 2017. This will be perceived as not being fair. It is a disproportionate sharing of the burden that will fall on the shoulders of Ontario families while large polluters are getting a bye because they get a carbon tax holiday.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to stand and speak to Bill 172 on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa South. I want to start by congratulating the minister for bringing this bill forward, for his passion and his openness to all members of the Legislature. I am going to repeat something that he said—not quite as how he said it, because it was to respond to the member from Niagara Falls, who asked for this response yesterday. I appreciated what we thought was a compliment. I understood the spirit it was made in so I won't be giving him a relative answer; I'll be giving him an accurate answer of exactly what this bill is going to do.

The proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Lowcarbon Economy Act would ensure transparency and accountability by committing to invest into projects that reduce greenhouse gas pollution and establish a greenhouse gas reduction account with the funds. Mandatory climate change action plans would need to include details related to how proceeds would be used, the estimated amount for funding for each action, a timetable for implementation, an estimate of the emissions reductions, and the cost per tonne of those potential reductions. We heard, in the minister's last two minutes, his response to how those funds are allocated and dedicated to those purposes. It's a regulatory fee.

I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe that all members of this Legislature are concerned about the environment. It's evident in this debate. If I listen to the members opposite, I hear support for the policy of capand-trade, that they have a favourable position towards that. The member from London West just said she unequivocally supports cap-and-trade. I heard member after

member yesterday speak to their support for cap-and-trade.

Now, I know that the opposition party had a bit of a revelation. I don't want to denigrate it and I want to believe the sincerity of it. The commitment would be better demonstrated if they had got their petitions down by yesterday afternoon.

What happened yesterday afternoon, for those of us who were here, was the debate kind of devolved into something that was not really great debate. It was probably entertaining for some of us in here. I participated in it. It probably contributed a lot to the greenhouse gas emissions from this particular building yesterday, and I don't think it was particularly productive.

The member from Essex put it very clearly: This is far, far too serious an issue for us to devolve debate into what it devolved into yesterday. It's picking up and starting to get to it today; you can hear it by some rhetoric coming out with regard to who said this, who said that and what people's intentions are.

In China, I think it was in Beijing, they had their first red alert smog day, and what that means is: Don't go outside; it will make you sick. Now, I remember watching movies of the dystopian future where we're all walking around with gas—

Ms. Cindy Forster: The Fog.

Mr. John Fraser: That's it, The Fog.

Maybe debate is devolving because we've had a lot of debate; we've had 10 hours of debate on this.

Here's how I hear the positions: Over here, they support cap-and-trade; they're concerned with transparency, and we are responding to that. I get that, I know where they are coming from. Conservatives are over here saying, "No, you've got it all wrong. Last weekend we decided we are in favour of putting a price on carbon." Yesterday, I heard the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke say that Mike Harris and Ernie Eves closed the coal plants and that we just locked the gate.

That's what makes me doubt the sincerity sometimes or the commitment to the new policy that they found last weekend. I'm going to accept their sincerity; I still have questions about their commitment.

It's very clear where they stand and it's becoming an opportunity to use highly inflamed rhetoric around the use of that money that I think is inappropriate rhetoric. It's fine; we can use it in this House. What I think of it is maybe not what everybody else thinks of it. Using terms like "slush fund," and rolling it all up—I think that when you're starting to get to that point in the debate, you're not actually debating the substance of what's there.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, that's exactly what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker. This is far too serious for us to devolve down to this kind of rhetoric and debate.

I listened closely to the debate yesterday, even the stuff that I would say got a little out of hand. I participated in that. The positions are very clear. The positions are very clear about where everybody is coming from. I agree with the member from Timmins—James Bay when

he said in yesterday's afternoon debate, "I want this bill to go to committee, so that other people can look at it and tell us what they think."

So given all those things, I move that the question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Fraser has moved that the question be now put.

I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House, which was just under 11 hours.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote will be required. This vote will be deferred until after question period.

Vote deferred.

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

0930

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This is not the first time that we've dealt with this particular issue. This bill, in a different machination, was before the House in the previous Parliament. There's some good in what the government is trying to do, but I'm thinking it's leaving a lot of municipalities scratching their heads and figuring out how they're going to pay for this. The way the government has set this up is that rather than the people who cause the cost of having to pick up the large recycling of those items that are covered by this bill, boxes and other such things—rather than them paying, we're essentially asking ratepayers to pay. And the municipalities are saying they've only got so much that they're able to do when it comes to room with the budgets they've got, and where are they going to get the money to offset all of this? I think municipalities are willing to do their part, but we need to have some system by which the people who make the products also have to pay at the front end so that it's not the ratepayer at the end of the taxes who ends up having to pay. Ît's always the same story with these people. It seems that the government has a predilection

for passing on the cost from industry and pushing it onto the consumer and, in this case, the ratepayers of our municipalities.

J'ai entendu, par exemple, de la ville de Hearst, qu'ils ont eu un débat assez animé sur cette question, justement, peut-être il y a un mois passé. Je sais que j'en ai parlé avec une couple de conseillers, dont André Rhéaume, et d'autres. Eux autres soulèvent la question et ils disent, « Écoute, on veut faire ce qui est bien et bon, puis on veut faire notre part. On comprend tous qu'à la fin de la journée, on a besoin d'avoir un système de recyclage qui marche, qui fait du bon sens et qui accomplit le but d'assurer qu'on recycle autant que possible plutôt que de mettre des affaires dans les dépotoirs. Mais, pourquoi estce que c'est la municipalité qui va devoir payer la majorité du coût pour être capable de mettre ce système-là en place? »

So, donc, les municipalités, telles que Hearst et telles que d'autres communautés qu'on a entendues à travers AMO, the Ontario municipal association, disent qu'il y a un vrai problème avec la manière que cette affaire-là est faite. Moi, je me demande pourquoi le gouvernement a fait la décision de changer un peu le concept du premier projet de loi, qui aurait vu une plus grosse responsabilité de la part de l'industrie que dans cette version de la loi—à cette heure qu'ils sont une majorité—où on va transférer le coût à ceux qui payent les taxes dans nos municipalités.

Je pense que le gouvernement a manqué un peu son coup. Possiblement, si on est bien chanceux, quand ce projet de loi arrive au comité, il va y avoir une chance pour les communautés, telles que Hearst et d'autres, d'arriver devant le gouvernement et de leur poser cette question-là.

Je vais vous dire à ce point-ci, monsieur le Président, que je ne sais pas si vous le savez, mais la province de l'Ontario est plus grande que Toronto. Il y a d'autres municipalités. Il y a des municipalités comme Hearst, des municipalités comme Ottawa, Kenora, Sioux Lookout, Cornwall, Sarnia—il y a bien des municipalités dans la province. Mais ce gouvernement, quand ça vient à l'habileté du public de venir présenter devant un comité, ils disent, « Oh! On va aller à Toronto. On va rester ici, et tout le monde a besoin de venir à Toronto pour présenter à ces comités. »

Dans le cas de ce projet de loi, je pense qu'on serait très bien servi si le comité embarquait dans un autobus— ou dans l'avion, dépendamment d'où on s'en va—et puis s'en allait à quatre, cinq ou six communautés à travers la province et parlait à des municipalités moyennes, plus grandes et plus petites pour savoir ce que veut dire ce projet de loi-là, comment ça va marcher pour eux autres et comment on peut améliorer le projet de loi pour faire ce qui est bien et bon quand ça vient à l'environnement.

I don't know anybody, Mr. Speaker, who doesn't want to do what's right for the environment. We are all living on this very small planet, and we all want to do our thing to make sure that we don't pollute our planet and leave the planet in worse condition than when we were born on

it. So we have to do our bit, and recycling is a big part of that

As I was saying—it's a big surprise. I know that the government thinks that there's no other place but Toronto. I love Toronto; Toronto is a beautiful city. It's got a lot to offer—great people. But you know what? There's more to Ontario than just the city of Toronto, and that's why committees, when it comes to hearing from the public, shouldn't just stay here in Toronto in the Legislature. We should actually do what this Legislature did for over 100 years until these guys came along, and that is to travel committees out into the community.

When I got here in the 1990s, almost every controversial bill got to travel, and they would travel at least two to three weeks. If a government was doing a bill that affected northern Ontario, guess where that bill went? If the bill affected eastern Ontario, guess where that bill went? There was a sufficient amount of hearings that the public and those people affected were able to come forward.

In this case, we know that especially small communities across Ontario have an issue with this bill. Sitting on councils in municipalities across Ontario, from Welland to Port Colborne to Hearst to Chapleau and to other communities, those aldermen and councillors that sit at those council tables want to do what is right. They're green in their own right. They want to do their bit in order to make sure that we leave for our children a planet that is livable and not polluted. Part of doing that is making sure we have good recycling programs. But they want to do that in a way that makes sense for their communities.

So I would argue, let's travel this bill. Let's allow this bill to go to some of the communities that are going to be affected by it so that we can hear from residents, councillors and various people that are interested in this, so that we can actually get it right and actually finish amending this legislation in a way that people will say, "You know what? I can stand behind this. This is a really good bill."

Is this a good idea? Absolutely. Nobody is going to argue this is a bad bill. But I think it can be made a lot better, and I think one of the ways that we do that is that we go out and travel.

So, donc, avec les couples de minutes qu'il me reste, je ne veux que répéter que ce qui est important dans une démocratie, c'est de donner l'habileté au public d'avoir la chance de connecter avec leurs politiciens et d'être capable de connecter avec cette Assemblée. La manière qu'on fait ça, c'est à travers nos comités législatifs.

Comme j'ai dit tout à l'heure, non seulement les francophones mais la population ont toujours eu la chance dans le passé de venir présenter. Je demanderais au gouvernement, quand ils envoient ce projet de loi au comité, qu'ils s'assurent en effet qu'on ne fasse pas d'audiences publiques seulement ici à Toronto, mais qu'on fasse des audiences publiques dans d'autres communautés qui vont être affectées par le projet de loi.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Merci pour l'intervention du membre de Timmins-James Bay.

Nous avons beaucoup de discussions avec l'organisation des municipalités de l'Ontario, avec ROMA, et j'ai reçu la semaine passée une soumission de l'association municipale qui inclut des révisions de la loi. En général, je suis très d'accord avec ça.

We're working very closely, as a matter of fact—the discussions we've had with AMO, ROMA, NOMA and FONOM, from the member's area. I'm glad he's advocating for this. I think it's important, and I hope people continue to. I have confidence that he does—few people understand the north as much as the member, who's a well-known pilot and has probably seen more of the north than others. My family is in Sudbury and the Nickel Belt, and I am about as un-Toronto as a Toronto Centre MPP can be, having been mayor of a capital city where we'd call people like Gilles almost a southerner. So I understand the weather, the challenges, and we're being very sensitive.

We've actually set standards which are quite interesting, and I credit northern municipalities and rural municipalities. We've put service standards in that no one else in Canada has. It's interesting, because I immediately got a call from municipalities in northern and remote British Columbia, and it looks like the BC government is moving there. So there is a strong consensus amongst the environmental groups and the municipalities.

There is still some more work to do, to do some of these issues, but since this bill has gone through three debates now, people are anxious to get onto it. This is the third introduction of the bill. What's different, and I just want to take a moment, because I think from this Parliament—there's ideas from all parties. You'll see a lot of people's fingerprints in here on both sides of the House. There are many good ideas that have been offered over the years that we have tried to incorporate here.

This is actually called the "circular economy" bill, not just the "waste-free" bill. The other bill that we debated earlier today is actually the "low-carbon economy." I think, as members look at it, we are trying to get to a zero-waste economy by 2050, and a zero-carbon economy. The implementation of these two bills will be some of the biggest challenges we've ever had in Ontario because this is really economic legislation more than it is environmental legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm a little sad that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change had to end there because I was very interested in hearing what else he has to say about a zero-carbon economy. I think that we are all concerned about climate change in the House. We all want to see less waste. But we want to see it done in a fiscally responsible, transparent manner that doesn't rob people of their future through increased taxes. Our party is supporting, obviously, a revenue-neutral plan for taxing carbon.

That's not what we're seeing from the government at all. We're seeing a slush fund being set up to fund their projects, which they are not able to fund even though they are collecting revenue. Why? Because of mismanagement

I am very concerned about northern communities. The member from Timmins–James Bay brings up a lot of excellent points that a lot of times, here in the south, here in the GTA, we don't think about: the difficulties in the northern communities. They don't have transit and then they're supposed to pay an extra 4.5 cents a litre in taxes to offset carbon. They have no other options. What are they supposed to do, Mr. Speaker?

A main train line to take people up to northern communities was—

Mr. Jim McDonell: They cancelled that.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —cancelled, and people are sort framed

Yes, there's a lot more we can do to reduce waste, but people don't want to see neighbours pitted against neighbours, going through each other's garbage. They don't want police coming and looking through their garbage. The government doesn't necessarily know how many people live in a household.

I think that there are a lot of topics that really need to be discussed before we ram through legislation that can hurt our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a pleasure to get up and do two minutes on Bill 151, on waste reduction and resource recovery. I can tell you that for probably eight or nine years as a regional councillor, I sat on waste management's planning, steering and—there were two or three committees in the region of Niagara at that time. It is a real struggle for municipalities to get their minds around this. They try many different things. They do all kinds of pilots.

I know that in my own riding, we used to have two small contractors, Burger and Protz. For many years, they were the waste management people. When the region took over waste management from municipalities, there was this promise that waste management costs were going to go down. Well, in fact, they didn't go down, because after the first contract with waste management, which was a lowball, it edged out all the small contractors. It took lots of people who were making \$18, \$20, \$24 an hour at that time—I'm talking more than 10 years ago—out, to waste management which now has one guy on a truck making just over minimum wage, driving, jumping out, emptying the recycling and emptying the garbage.

Bigger isn't always better in the world of waste management. I think that there are jurisdictions that we can learn from that have simplified it. I often hear from seniors—older seniors who are still in their homes—about the difficulty they have with cutting the cardboard, tying the string around it, having three or four different boxes and trying to deal with their organics.

We also have young families who are trying to work two and three jobs who just don't have time to follow all these rules. I think that we need to find simpler ways for people to actually try and reduce waste, in their own ways.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: What is this bill all about? This bill can be summed up in a few, fairly simple descriptors. Some \$1 billion worth of recoverable material each and every year is lost to landfills. How much goes into landfills? This bill is about trying to find \$1 billion a year in something like eight million tonnes of waste that gets sent to landfills. If you really want to find an issue in your community, propose building a new dump; propose transporting waste through your community. This bill is all about, how do we reduce that?

What's the benefit of this bill? The benefit of this bill is that by recovering resources from waste, you can create something in the neighbourhood of 13,000 new jobs in the province of Ontario and contribute something like \$1.5 billion to Ontario's GDP. This is important. Just look at what a great recovery that Ontario has had in manufacturing, a subject I've spoken about particularly in our riding, where manufacturing has been one of the real drivers of Mississauga's economy coming out of the recession.

The green economy is going to be one of the major drivers of the first half of the 21st century, and Ontario has got a lot of raw material that, at the moment, is locked in landfills. What this bill is all about is opening up that industry and enabling the recovery of glass, metal, plastic and organic waste, and by reprocessing that and repurposing it—particularly such multiple-use materials as metals, for example; separating out iron, copper, lead and all other metals—you can recirculate them and put them right back into new construction.

That's what this bill is about, Speaker. It's about jobs, it's about investment and it's about moving forward in the 21st century.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to thank the members for their comments.

In the two minutes that I've got left, I want to congratulate a municipality that is actually getting it right, and that's my home town, the city of Timmins. We have a really excellent garbage and recycling system where it's all done at the same time. They're dual-combination trucks. What you have is a grey bin and green bin. They are quite large: A green bin is as big as this—pretty large—and the grey is a little bit smaller. You do your separation of garbage at your home and put your recycling, obviously, in the blue bin, I should say, and you put your garbage in the grey bin.

I've got to tell you that at our house and at the cottage, where we have that system, it is unbelievable the amount of garbage that we actually put into the landfill now as compared to before. You can go an entire week and cook

for your family and have the grandkids over and do all the stuff you got to do, and you're lucky if you put out a garbage bag. I'm not talking a big green one, but one of those kitchen catchers of garbage into the grey bin, because everything, once you start separating it out, is pretty recyclable.

It's kind of funny. Imagine little old me, Gilles from northern Ontario, with my family—I've become the recycle czar. I'm the guy who opens up the garbage at the cottage and goes, "Hey, you guys put Kleenex in there. What's that doing in there?" My family gets a big joke out of that because they've never seen me as that type of guy. But I see the value of it because it has really meant that we are not putting into our landfill a whole bunch of recyclables that have some value, that we can bring back into the economy, and, more importantly, that we are able to have a green environment.

I've only got a few seconds. The other side thing: We had a huge bear problem in the area where I'm out at, Kamiskotia. One of the things that helped is that they reopened the dump. But this whole system about how we deal with our garbage at our own properties through this system has also assisted in diminishing the amount of bears that wander on to our property.

So to the city of Timmins, a shout-out. I think they're doing a great job.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 151 this morning. I thought I might be speaking to a different bill this morning, but I'm looking forward to having a few comments on Bill 151 anyway.

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2015 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2015 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002, is a government bill put forward by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Mr. Speaker, our party has said we support this bill, although we are advocating for some changes. It is a topic that I've talked about before. In fact, when I learned in the last few minutes that I would be speaking to this, I went back in history to see one of the first times I was talking about the general concept of the bill.

0950

It turns out—time flies—it was Thursday, May 19, 2005, when I had the opportunity to put forward a private member's bill. At that time, I was debating my own private member's bill, which was Bill 195, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act with respect to the stewardship of products and of the packages or containers used for products. That really was the same general idea of what this bill is trying to do.

Initially, when I was going to do the private member's bill, I was just looking into deposit-return systems, which I thought worked quite effectively to recycle materials and reuse materials, particularly the system The Beer Store in Ontario uses, which has been so effective. But after meeting with constituents in my riding, in particular

Dr. Jim McTaggart-Cowan—he had been out in British Columbia, where they had a product stewardship system, and he brought that to my attention, so I decided to expand my private member's bill to be more about product stewardship. I want to quote from that, from 11 years ago, to talk about what product stewardship is.

"So what is product stewardship? It's a management system based on industry and consumers taking full responsibility for the products they produce and use, from their inception through to their final reuse or recycle state. It's cradle-to-cradle management. The way it works is that government, on behalf of consumers, has three

supportive roles.

"First, it identifies which products it wants embraced, establishes targets for product capture and charges industry with the responsibility of forming a management board and preparing stewardship plans. Second, it assists industry by putting in place regulations to support the collective industry approach and ensures a level playing field for all corporations involved in the relevant sector. Third, it approves stewardship plans, monitors industry progress and ensures that plans are altered to achieve overall objectives.

"Through this product stewardship approach, government moves away from funding, at taxpayers' expense, waste management. Instead, it holds industry responsible for the full life cycle of a product but leaves it to industry to find the most cost-effective and efficient way to achieve it, assisting where necessary and desired."

I went on to illustrate, using the deposit-returns example, how that would work. In the case of beverage containers, "First, government designates beverage containers. Then government establishes a recovery rate of, say, 85% in three years. It charges industry with the responsibility of forming a management board, which prepares a stewardship plan. Government approves and monitors the stewardship plan, which, in this case, includes a deposit-return system. If industry doesn't meet the target of 85% recovery, it must make changes to the plan. In the case of a deposit-return system," the simple way you change the plan, the most likely thing you would do, is increase the deposit, which would then incent people to return the beverage containers.

"Product stewardship works because industry comes up with the solutions. They know their business best, and they will come up with solutions that are both cost-effective"—because they're responsible for a lot of the costs—"and that get the job done."

I went on to talk a bit about BC, because at that point—and now here we are 11 years later—BC was so much ahead of us here in Ontario.

"In the year 2000, BC recovered 61% of glass bottles, compared to 45% in Ontario, 73% of PET, compared to 16% in Ontario—that's probably why we have so much plastic in our ditches—and 84% of aluminum cans, compared to 50% in Ontario."

They had a system for paint, which we just don't have in Ontario, under their product stewardship system. In BC, where paint is a designated product, it has changed the way they sell paint. Here in Ontario, our system is biased towards larger containers. Most of us have garages or basements full of partly filled containers of paint which, hopefully, eventually get disposed of in the proper way at one of the centres, where they can at least keep it out of drains and sewers. When you buy the four-litre container, it's cheaper than if you buy one litre, so we usually buy four litres. Who doesn't have a garage—and this is me, 11 years ago—full of partly filled paint cans? Where does the paint end up?

In BC, product stewardship has changed the way they sell paint. There are more water-based paints. In some cases, you can bring your own container and have it filled. A 2003 BC government summary report looked at the paint stewardship program, which covers paints, solvents, flammable liquids, pesticides and gasoline. It is run by Product Care, a national, non-profit stewardship association made up of 100 brand owners. Product Care's membership includes manufacturers, distributors and retailers. In 2003, they collected 5,683,000 equivalent litre containers of paint and gave away 107,000 litres in a paint exchange program. Flammable liquids collected were 121,000 litres, and pesticides collected were 31,000 litres. The way they used that was that 4.6% of paint was given back to consumers; 66% was recycled/reprocessed as paint and used in concrete manufacturing; 29% was used for energy recovery through fuel blending; and 0.2% was incinerated; 0% was landfill.

You can see that product stewardship—this is way back in 2003—in BC was working. I'm proud to have brought this up in the Legislature back in 2005, with that private member's bill that I'm very proud of. That's an approach that our party, in later years, has adopted, and I'm happy about that, because I think it makes sense. I'm happy to see that the government is implementing a system that picks up some of those ideas.

I'm sure there are still some concerns, particularly in the municipal area and what happens with the funding of the blue box system to do with this, and we'll be watching that very, very carefully.

The Ontario PCs certainly have long championed a plan to increase recycling and reduce waste through innovation and competition among businesses in the private sector. That's exactly what I was talking about in my private member's bill.

Under the PC plan that we put forward, we would set measureable and achievable recycling targets for businesses, establish environmental standards and enforce the rules. Instead of government being in the business of trying to run these systems—which governments generally are pretty inefficient at doing, and usually make lots of mistakes—you have governments do what they should do, which is set the targets, be the enforcer and make sure the rules and the targets are met. If they aren't met, then there are ways of achieving that, by fines or other means the government has. It's certainly an approach that I'm pleased to see, in this bill, Bill 151, that the government is moving towards. We will certainly be very interested to see, in the way that it's implemented, that it's done in a way that benefits the province.

We want to see a legislated timeline to eliminate some of the existing programs the government has, some of the eco tax programs. We want to see the waste cops that police recycling bins and garbage cans around the province dropped, and we want to see a reduction in the red tape and the costs in the current program.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have had a few minutes to talk about this important bill. Certainly, our party will be looking forward to it and following it closely. We support in principle the bill, but there are lots of details that we will need to follow as it moves into committee etc.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you so much, Speaker, for allowing me to put a few words on the record.

It was very interesting to listen to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, especially when he was talking about paint. I agree. I'm as guilty as everybody else. An entire wall of my garage is full of quarter- and half-empty paint cans, and I have some more in the basement. I'm guessing that I'm sort of average in that category.

The paint cans are really just an example as to why it is so important to travel with this bill, because life is different in the different parts of this beautiful province that we represent, and there are great ideas throughout. Wanting to recycle, wanting to recirculate, wanting to be green, is something that is shared throughout Ontario. You can travel to big areas, small areas, rural or remote. We all share the same thing: Nobody likes garbage. If it can be reduced, reused, recycled, we're all for it. Sometimes there are some pretty nifty ideas that have been put forward. Let's travel this bill. Let's bring it to the different areas.

I can tell you that garbage pickup and recycling in my riding is very different than in Toronto. I represent 30 little villages; none of them are big enough to be a municipality. None of them have mayors or councillors or anything like that, but everybody wants to recycle. What happens in my neck of the woods is that you usually have a neighbour with a pickup who will come around, you give him or her your garbage and they bring it to the dump for you. What happens at the dump is very different than what happens at the curbs for most of you. Come and see how it's done.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Ballard: This is one of those debates that I like to participate in, because I think we're all on the same page when it comes to recycling and the impact that waste diversion has on our environment, and especially, as well—something that we forget about—the impact it has on our economy.

As a town councillor in Aurora, I know that we struggled with waste diversion costs and blue box costs, but we knew that we had to provide this service. This is a much-needed service that our residents were demanding and our residents used. I know, at the same time, our

municipal partners have struggled with those costs, so it's a good thing to see these recommendations put forward.

Just flipping to the economic argument for recycling, we're stuck at about 25% of waste diversion, we're told, which I think is appallingly low. I know that people want to do more. I know that my neighbours, friends and family want to do more. We need to help them to do more. This bill will help them do just that.

Things that leap out at me when you look at waste diversion in Ontario: For example, there is right now about \$1 billion worth of recoverable materials lost to landfills across Canada each year. I find that mind-boggling, that we would be throwing away valuable material. I heard the member from Timmins—James Bay talk about going through the household waste to make sure not an ounce of metal went out. He should meet my wife; she is unbelievable. Not a bag leaves the house, not a garbage can goes out of our house, without my wife going through it and pulling out everything that can be recycled. Heaven forbid if she catches you throwing something out that can be recycled.

This bill is going in the right direction, and I'm so delighted to see the support thus far.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Actually, I would like to follow on the pattern that has been created by the member for Newmarket–Aurora. On the issue of personal responsibility, I think that this bill missed a huge opportunity not to reference the fact that it all begins with individuals who make choices. We need to have a better understanding of those choices.

On the one hand, packaging has advanced tremendously in terms of its ability to bring an apple in its own little cradle from Chile, South America or South Africa, anywhere in the world, and all those individually wrapped fruits are there. But they also come with their waste and the question of the appropriate diversion for the packaging that's used. I think that this bill needs to also provide people with an understanding. When we go to the grocery store, we want our food to be in bags or containers or things like that that are hygienic. We don't want outbreaks of diseases, but there's a price to pay, and that price to pay is the kind of packaging that we have today.

I would just want to remind people that, as a consumer, you also have a responsibility for the products you buy and the manner in which you dispose of their packaging.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: The NDP, for many, many years, has pushed to have producers pay more of the freight around the packaging they produce. I don't know whether you've noticed, but anything bought in recent years is packed mostly with Styrofoam, something that does not degrade in any way. I know just recently, having bought a new printer for my home last week, there were probably 10 pieces of Styrofoam. Inside the box, there were four more boxes. Each cord was in a box instead of

perhaps being wrapped in a piece of paper—newspaper or some kind of paper. It filled my grey box when I did my recycling on Sunday afternoon.

I know that the Niagara region, where I live, is certainly weighing in and having a look at this bill, as well as the waste-free bill. They are concerned—I was reading an article in the local newspaper—and at this point, they don't know what it's going to mean to municipalities because there's not a lot of detail in the bill. It's really enabling legislation, so they don't know what role municipalities are going to play at the end of the day. They wonder whether or not blue boxing will actually move to the private sector and what role they'll play in that.

But what they did say was—and we've heard it here this morning from several people—that when they open garbage bags in the Niagara region, 50% of it still should be in a green bin, a grey bin or a blue bin, and that diversion rates have really stagnated. So whatever we can do to improve that certainly will help in my riding, where we still have a landfill site.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, you have two minutes.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 151, particularly from the riding I represent, Parry Sound–Muskoka. The environment is certainly one of our top concerns, so any bills that are relevant to the environment, including how we deal with waste, are very important to my riding.

Waste diversion in Ontario has been stalled at 25% for many years, so I think we need to look at systems that work better. That's why I was very proud, back in May 2005, to put forward a product stewardship bill where industry is responsible for the full life cycle of products, so that they look at things, as was mentioned in some of the comments from other members, like packaging and whether you can recycle or how you deal with the packaging and how you minimize packaging as part of selling products, because the producer of that packaging is responsible for it and has the cost of dealing with it.

I would like to thank the member from Nickel Belt, who suggested that we should be travelling with this; I agree. That's where we get good ideas. It was a constituent of mine, a scientist, Jim McTaggart-Cowan, who had spent a lot of time in BC, who was the reason I did a product stewardship bill. I was initially just going to do a deposit-return bill. I learned from his knowledge that it made a lot more sense to talk about not just deposit-return but more about full life cycle and product stewardship.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora was talking about cost; the member from York–Simcoe was talking about personal responsibility; and I thank the member from Welland for her comments as well. It's a pleasure to have the opportunity this morning to speak to this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much. Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 10:10 to 10:30 a.m.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, we had a discussion amongst the House leaders this morning. I'm seeking unanimous consent to allow a sign-language interpreter to be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the second question and supplementary of the third party, and the minister's response.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins—James Bay is seeking unanimous consent to have an interpreter on the floor for a question. Do we agree? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Dick Hibma. He's in the audience today. He is the chair of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. He's a great community supporter, and we welcome him to Queen's Park.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to join the member opposite and welcome Dick Hibma to Queen's Park, along with his colleagues in the conservation movement: Lin Gibson, the vice-chair of Conservation Ontario; Mark Burnham, vice-chair and treasurer of Conservation Ontario; Kim Gavine, general manager of Conservation Ontario; and representatives from many of Ontario's conservation authorities in the public gallery. I invite all members to attend their reception at noon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome Brian Tayler, Sue Buckle and Dave Mendicino to the Legislature. They're here with the conservation authorities today.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want all members to welcome Tony Saliba. Tony is a dedicated public servant of over 25 years. He has been with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services for all of his tenure, working in our correctional institutions and regional and corporate offices in various roles.

Tony's commitment is unparalleled. Most recently, he worked tirelessly to help construct and commission the new South West Detention Centre in Windsor and the Toronto South Detention Centre. Tony's retirement at the end of this month is well earned. We thank him for his service and wish him all the best. Thank you, Tony.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am so proud today to introduce three very special students who have been able to attend Queen's Park today. Omar Elchami, Hannah MacLean and Becca Haggith are here today for question period. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Welcome.

Mr. Bill Walker: I don't believe he's in this room, but he is in the building. John Cottrill is the CAO of Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. I welcome him to Queen's Park and thank him for all his work on behalf of our nature conservancies.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Joe Garro, who is the father of page captain Andrew Garro.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, early this morning I got an email from my wife, who said I was to let the assembly know that the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane will be celebrating his birthday next Monday, and that we wouldn't be here next Monday so I should do it today.

Hon. Liz Sandals: He isn't even listening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to take the liberty of making sure that the member from Timis-kaming—Cochrane—

Interjection: He's still not listening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to take a moment—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I understand the nuances of the House. Please, forgive me. I don't want to chastise anybody on this one.

I just wanted to make sure that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane heard that Uncle Ernie said "Happy birthday."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Don't mess with somebody's birthday. That's all I've got to say.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PESTICIDES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. We know this Liberal government can't get anything right with the neonics ban. The Liberals are telling farmers they can no longer use this pesticide. Yet in the next breath, they're telling farmers that they must protect their crops from the corn flea beetle. Well, guess what, Mr. Speaker? The only possible treatment for this pest that has been approved in Canada is—you guessed it—neonics.

Does the Premier agree with the principle that agricultural policy should be based on science, not emotion? And can the Premier name one single grain farmer in the province of Ontario who supports their reckless policy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On this side of the House we believe that pollinator health is very, very important to the ecology of our planet. Over the last few years, overwinter honeybee mortality rates have exceeded what is normally expected.

I understand that this is a huge concern. It's not just a concern among beekeepers. This should be a concern for all of us, that we have strong pollinator health, because really, that is how the ecosystem works.

We've experienced in Ontario-

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My intent is to remain consistent with my expectations from both sides: questions put, answers put. I need to hear.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —a large number of acute bee deaths, spring, summer and fall months. We're taking a precautionary approach—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Immediately after I asked for attention, the minister from Prince Edward–Hastings decides to tell—

Interjections: Minister?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't have a crystal ball.

Member, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're taking a precautionary approach, and Ontario farmers who can demonstrate the need will continue to have access to neonicotinoid-treated seeds.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member for Huron-Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change: Speaker, I know how much the minister is on Twitter, and I can tell you, if he cared to know what farmers think, he wouldn't be blocking some grain farmers from his personal account. The truth is, I worry that the Liberals don't care what farmers think.

Farmers continue to ask this government for clarification on how to protect their crops this season from the corn flea beetle, since the only treatment available is a seed treatment, but the minister won't say. In fact, government officials have admitted to farmers that the minister has the power to fix this mistake and allow Ontario farmers to protect their crop this year against the corn flea beetle. So why won't the minister act? The minister has the power to work with farmers and prevent the loss of crops this season.

Speaker, will the minister put politics aside today and actually work with grain farmers to develop this solution?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The original question was directed to the Premier. It will be directed to the Premier, and it will be the Premier's choice as to who answers the question.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just say to the leader and to the member opposite that this actually was an issue when I was the Minister of Agriculture and Food. We were working with beekeepers, we were working with grain and oilseed farmers, and the current minister-

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The current Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change have worked very closely together, because this is such an important issue. Of course it's an important issue to grain farmers, but this is an important issue across the agriculture sector, and it's important across our society that we have strong pollinator health.

Farmers who can demonstrate the need still can use neonicotinoid-treated seeds, but the fact is, we have to make sure that we have strong bees in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Back to the Premier: The facts speak for themselves. The Liberals have botched the rollout of their neonics plan so badly that they are now facing lawsuits from farmers. In fact, five busloads of grain farmers attended a hearing yesterday in Toronto to get the courts to clean up the Liberals' mess. How many farmers will face financial hardship if changes aren't made to the ban? You know what? Sadly, the Liberals refuse to listen.

Speaker, does the Premier not understand the concerns of Ontario farmers? Or is this the Liberals' new agricultural policy: "Do what we say, or we'll see you in court"?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just say that there has been an enormous amount of pressure from other jurisdictions, in Europe and so on, to actually put a ban in place on neonics. We didn't do that.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You have government officials saying—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member asked the question.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We said, and I said, and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has said that putting a ban in place was not based in science. That wasn't what we were going to do—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's the second time. The member asked the question, and heckling is not really logical to me.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. It's not a debate.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We didn't leap to that conclusion. We've taken a precautionary approach. Quebec has adopted and supports the same policy.

As I have said, Ontario farmers who demonstrate the need—because there are different conditions in different parts of the province—can still use neonicotinoids.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. This is my last question in the Legislature this week, and I wanted to remind everyone how much more expensive—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjection: You guys need a break.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Somebody might be looking for an early one.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. Let's not use this to get the last shot in, please.

Leader.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the government may be averse to tough public policy questions, but I wanted to remind everyone, during this last question, how much more expensive life will be in Ontario after this budget.

According to the CBC report on February 26, this budget increases virtually every other government service fee. At the same time, it cuts popular middle-class tax credits for education and active children. Life is just more expensive for the average family.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, how out of touch is our Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to go over what our budget does. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition might see that there are some elements of this budget that he actually should support.

For example, taking action on climate change, and investing cap-and-trade proceeds transparently into green projects that reduce pollution, might be something he'd like to support.

Transforming student assistance, actually providing free tuition for low-income families and more affordable—this is important, Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition talked about the middle class. In fact, what our budget does is provide more affordable tuition for middle-income families. I would think he would support that.

I was at the ground-breaking of a station on the Eglinton Crosstown today—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll come back to that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Absolutely.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Minister of Natural Resources said I was wrong when I called out the government for raising fees connected to his ministry. It appears that the minister did not read pages 190 and 191 of the budget. Those pages explicitly state that fees will be going up. Page 190 specifically lists which fees are going up: fees charged for driver and vehicle licensing, camping in Ontario parks, fishing and hunting licences, just to name a few.

I assume the Premier has a better grasp of what's in the budget than her ministers do. Will the Premier apologize for making the lives of those in rural Ontario so much more expensive?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just continue. I was talking about the infrastructure investment that we were making. I was at the ground-breaking of a station on the Eglinton line today.

Also in our budget, and just to speak to the fee issue: the lowering of hospital fees, making the shingles vaccine free for eligible seniors, and the elimination of the Drive Clean emissions fee. In addition to that, we are helping families with the cost of electricity—residential electricity users—saving them about \$70 a year with the removal of the debt retirement charge. And we are improving services for children and youth with autism, a \$333-million investment that will help hundreds of families around this province, middle-income and otherwise.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: That answer wasn't even remotely connected to the question—not even remotely.

If you have a child playing sports, the Liberals took that help away. Do you like the great outdoors? That costs you more now. Getting a degree? The Premier took those tax credits away. Have to renew your driver's licence? Well, those fees are going up. Seniors needing medication? Sorry, the Liberals are making that more expensive.

Can the Premier tell this House which one of her billion-dollar scandals she's using all these fee increases to pay for? Is it eHealth? Is it Ornge? Is it the gas plants? Which one of this government's scandals is this budget paying for?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

I'm going to take a moment to ask the deputy House leader to check his comments, please.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to the 173,000 seniors who will no longer pay any deductible, whose medication will be free in Ontario because of the changes that we're making.

I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to the thousands of young people from low- and middle-income families who are no longer going to have to pay tuition at all or not as much tuition. They are going to have access to post-secondary education and therefore access to a better job that will help them in their lives, but that will also help our economy to grow. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to those families.

I would also ask the Leader of the Opposition to talk to the families of children with autism who have not been able to get service who are going to receive service, and support and resources in order to get their children service. I'd ask him to talk to those families and see what they think about the support that they're getting.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre.

Speaker, I live in beautiful northern Ontario, and I can assure you that things cost more in northern Ontario than they do down here. Seniors across northern and rural Ontario also live with higher costs.

Does the Premier think that it is fair to nearly double the drug costs for most seniors living in northern and rural Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think that what is fair is that low-income seniors who are not able to pay the deductible for their medication—that we would remove that cost from them, and that 173,000 more seniors would pay no deductible and would receive their medications without any payment. I think that's what is fair.

In terms of the second part of that initiative, I have said over and over in this House that we have a regulation that has been posted. We are hearing from folks in the process of that consultation. If that threshold is not right, then we will, in response to what we hear, make a change.

But 173,000 more seniors in the north, in rural communities and in our urban and suburban centres will no longer have to pay a deductible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, I and New Democrats believe that the strength of our health care system comes from universality. It is there for all of us. In public the Premier certainly talks about universality in health care, but right now her actions are speaking louder than her words.

Most seniors will see their medication costs get more expensive. Can the Premier tell us how many seniors will end up paying more for their medication?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would have assumed, but I don't know if the member opposite understands that everyone who we're talking about in terms of the 173,000—

Mr. Paul Miller: Oh, no, no one else understands but you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): What I understand is that the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is coming closer to the Speaker and I am hearing him again.

Mr. Mike Colle: He's in the wrong seat.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Nor do I want to hear someone else armchair-quarterbacking my rules.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Those 173,000 seniors, Mr. Speaker, have been paying a \$100 deductible for their medications. They will no longer have to pay that. I actually would have thought that would have been a policy that the NDP would support: removing a cost for

seniors that has been there for many years and that they will no longer have to pay. We are removing that, and 173,000 more seniors will not have to pay a deductible that they have been paying for many years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am worried about the one million seniors who will have to pay more. Most seniors in northern Ontario can't afford to see their medication costs double. When the camera is on, the Premier is all about universal health care based on need, not on ability to pay, and that we need more drug coverage. But the Liberal government is moving in the complete opposite direction. It is a plan that is bad for one million Ontario seniors and doubly hard for the struggling seniors of the north. Does the Premier really think that another 20 days is needed to realize that her plans move Ontario in the wrong direction?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, it is really disheartening to hear the third party talk about this program in this fashion when 173,000 new seniors will go from paying a \$100 deductible each year to paying zero dollars deductible.

I know the leader of the party is in the north today and tomorrow, having consultations. I think it's her responsibility not just to talk about the increase that was conceived of and considered in the budget that we're going to consult on, but to also talk about the 173,000 individuals who will no longer pay any annual deductible. Because to do otherwise is not doing the right thing for the people of Ontario. Many of those people reside in the north. They will benefit from this change. We're consulting on the rest of it. It's a figure that's important, 173,000, so nearly half a million Ontario seniors will pay no deductible whatsoever.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. This morning, I was joined by students, parents and advocates in calling on the government to ensure that specialized provincial and demonstration schools that support deaf, blind, deaf-blind and/or other severely learning disabled students in Ontario will remain open.

Provincial and demonstration schools play an important role in helping kids with exceptional needs to succeed. Parents, students and community organizations are very concerned with the so-called consultations currently under way. If this government was truly consulting, they would not have stopped enrolment into these specialized schools. Speaker, my question is simple: Will the Premier guarantee that no provincial or demonstration school will be closed as a result of consultations? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to begin by welcoming to the Legislature this morning students from the Robarts provincial school for the deaf and also, I believe, from the Amethyst Demonstration School in London. I'm not sure if there are people from other locations, but I think Robarts and Amethyst families and students are here. Welcome to the Legislature.

I do want to say that we're committed to the success and well-being of every child and student, including students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, who are blind and have low vision, deaf-blind or those with severe learning disabilities. Just like the member opposite, we do care about that.

I want to assure not just you, Speaker, but also the families and students who are here today, that we have made no—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to go back to the Premier. Kids who currently attend Amethyst Demonstration School in my community of London are here with us today, students like Becca Haggith and Omar Elchami.

Becca Haggith is also a pupil at the provincially run Amethyst Demonstration School. She has jumped seven reading levels in less than two years. Omar has gone from a grade 2 reading level to a grade 7 reading level, thanks to specialized programming and supports offered by Amethyst school. We have heard from many other students across the province that these programs have the ability to truly change lives.

In my community of London, both Amethyst and the Robarts School for the Deaf are on the chopping block. Can the government please explain to these kids here today and across the province why they are stopping enrolment at such schools if they are really, truly only

consulting?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I've actually had the opportunity to visit with parents and visit with students, not just at Amethyst but also at the Trillium Demonstration School in Milton and the demonstration school at Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa, which is the French-language demonstration school. We are just sorting out the scheduling for Sagonaska in Belleville.

I would like to agree with the member. It is very clear that the focused programming that is provided at the demonstration schools—the focus on reading—is absolutely, transformingly effective for the students who talk about being able to enter the school with a kindergarten or grade 1 level and leave the program a year or two later at a grade 9 reading level. That's totally transformational.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplement-

ary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I would really like to hear from the Premier on this. The Minister of Education herself continually stands in the House and talks about how great provincial and demonstration schools are for our communities, the important role they play and the life-changing experience students are able to have. As such, it truly boggles the mind to think that this government is considering closing these programs, leaving our most vulnerable kids behind.

I will ask again: Will the Premier admit her mistake and guarantee that all provincial and demonstration schools, including the ones in my community of London, will stay open?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: What I want to reflect on is that the four demonstration schools serve about 155 children right now. We know that there are thousands of children in Ontario who are struggling to learn to read, and we want to make sure that we can learn from the programs in the demonstration schools. How do we deliver those focused programs that can help children catch up in their reading skills so that they can thrive in programs? We need to figure out how to learn from the demonstration schools and to be able to do that all over the province, not just in four locations. We need to understand how we can help more children benefit from these wonderful programs which target children who are at average or above intelligence but who just haven't been able to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Today marks the third time in three weeks that I have had to question the Premier and the minister about their lack of oversight of what many are calling the "rogue" Liberal transit planning agency, Metrolinx.

Mississauga mayor Bonnie Crombie is calling Metrolinx's behaviour appalling, saying, "They operate within their own set of rules," after inspecting yet another

botched development for a simple bus station.

Councillor Carolyn Parrish says that she thinks "it's appalling.... This is disgusting," and she adds that she doesn't even trust them.

1100

Speaker, if our municipal colleagues don't trust them, how can the people of Ontario trust the Premier to oversee Metrolinx's spending of billions for transit expansion across the province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transpor-

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his question. I actually had the chance to speak—or converse or communicate—last night with Mayor Bonnie Crombie from Mississauga, I had the chance to speak with a couple of our caucus members from Peel region from Mississauga today, and I also have spoken to Metrolinx board chair Rob Prichard just this morning as well. I understand that there are some concerns that have been expressed by residents in Mississauga as well as by municipal councillors. The commitment that I conveyed to the mayor was that we would continue to work with her and her council and her staff and her residents to make sure that we can get this right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? Mr. Michael Harris: Busy night there.

Speaker, in the last month, we've continued to hear stories of the Liberal transit planning agency wasting tax-payers' money, from the UP Express planning to a train shed too small to fit the trains. Now we have a bus station in Mississauga where bathroom ventilation exhaust is aimed at a swimming pool—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, second time.

Mr. Michael Harris: —where bus passengers can peer over backyard fences into homes and lights are shining all night. Mayor Crombie says, "There were design changes after the (public) consultation," leaving the neighbourhood to pay the price. If Metrolinx is "rogue," as the mayor indicates, then it's this government that has allowed it to go that way. It's their responsibility.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, it is.

Speaker, will the Premier please explain to Ontarians how they can trust her with the billions of dollars she's overseeing to build, operate and manage transit in Ontario?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I mentioned in my original answer to the first question, I've had a chance to speak to the mayor. We will, on a going-forward basis on this particular issue, continue to work with her, her council and people who live in her community.

But I have to point out that this is a government, thanks to the leadership of our Premier and our Mississauga MPPs on this side of the House, that is investing billions of dollars, including in Mississauga: the Hurontario LRT, in addition to more GO service on the Lakeshore West line and ultimately on the Milton line that runs through Mississauga.

I know that Mayor Crombie and her council and, most importantly, the residents of Mississauga understand that, unlike the last time, when that party—the Conservatives—were in power, we're building transit, we're not killing it. As the Premier mentioned, we were at an LRT station this morning. We're building along Eglinton. We're building in Mississauga. It's about time you recognized our progress.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, the Financial Accountability Office released its commentary on the budget's fiscal plan. The FAO says that this budget continues to rely on "aggressive plans to limit the growth in program spending." The Liberal government likes to congratulate itself on the fact that Ontario already has the lowest program spending per person in the entire country, but New Democrats know that it's Ontarians who feel the impact day in and day out. The 2016 budget already doesn't keep up with inflation to meet the educational and the health care needs of Ontarians, building on years of cuts.

My question to the minister is simple. This year's budget cuts almost \$1.5 billion to the public service. What other program cuts are in store for Ontarians next year and the year after that?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. It gives me the opportunity to express once again the tremendous amounts of investment that we're making in our economy, in our programs, in the programs that are essential and valuable to families across Ontario, like health care and education. Over \$1 billion more is being invested in our education system and in our health care system.

We're being very progressive in this budget while still balancing the books by 2017-18 and thereafter. This is done in consultation with, and with the work of, many across Ontario. Our economy is growing. Our businesses are growing. Employment is growing. We are actually outpacing the United States in growth. Our debt-to-GDP is strong relative to what it was expected to be. Mr. Speaker, we're heading forward and progressing forward because of the work we're doing in conjunction with businesses and the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Speaker, the minister should read his own budget. On page 256, it's almost \$1.5 billion in cuts to education and even post-secondary education—in-year cuts.

Again to the minister: The FAO also highlighted that this government's fiscal plan depends on "optimistic" assumptions for revenue growth, pointing to more than half a billion dollars year after year from more asset sales.

The budget, however, isn't transparent. It doesn't tell Ontarians exactly what assets will be sold. Speaker, they can't blame us for questioning them. No one thought this government would sell off Hydro One. Some 80% of Ontarians have been loud and clear about stopping the sale of Hydro One, but this government refuses to listen to anyone, not even the citizens who took the time to come and speak to the finance committee directly through the budget process.

Can the minister tell Ontarians exactly where that money is coming from, or is that a secret too?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, as finance minister, I did, in fact, invite the finance committee to meet and to discuss some of the consultation on the work that was being done. They instead asked me to go to them, and I did. I shared with them some of the work that had been going on and in recognizing how important it is for us to continue investing.

Let me clarify: We're investing more in health care. We're investing more in education. We're investing more in post-secondary. We're investing more in children's and social services, like autism and special needs. What we are doing is to provide more for cancer treatment, for hospitals, for home care, for long-term care, and for hospices and palliative care—the very things that were consulted in the consultations. That's what people were

asking for; that's what we're delivering. And, Mr. Speaker, we're balancing the books at the same time.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Like everyone in this House and also within the PC Party, I was genuinely surprised when the Leader of the Opposition proclaimed over the weekend that his party now supports carbon pricing. I was surprised given that the PC Party of Ontario has bitterly resisted, at every turn, every single environmental initiative that our government has taken, from closing coal plants to investing in green energy.

I also know that the minister has legislation before this House to combat climate change through cap-and-trade; however, despite flip-flops by the Leader of the Opposition, I have continued to hear members of his own party

oppose our plan.

My question to the minister: Can he inform the House on why Ontario's proposed plan to combat climate change is the best to reduce emissions while also growing our economy?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think we recognize that to reduce emissions, people need help. So we have a fund coming from a polluter-pay principle that puts money back.

Many members over here are running online petitions. We have carbon calculators and we have links to the programs of our province and municipalities. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, because the members opposite—Nipissing, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Perth–Wellington, Sarnia–Lambton, and Haldimand–Norfolk—are all running online petitions against carbon taxes, against their own party's position.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Focus.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

It was really wild for me because the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke was demanding that we spend more money on home retrofits—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —on propane and oil; at the same time, they're running petitions against any revenue, and the balance of the caucus thinks it should be revenue-neutral so there will be no money for carbon reduction programs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A reminder to stay focused on government policy, please.

Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you to the minister for that response. It is indeed confusing where exactly the Leader of the Opposition stands and what the rest of his party actually believes.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm going to ask: If members already have been instructed to stay on government policy, just ask the question in a different manner, please.

1110

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I believe that our Premier said it best: It's better late than never. So our government has taken significant action to fight climate change and is presenting a credible path forward with our cap-and-trade program. All proceeds from the cap-and-trade program must be reinvested in green projects that reduce or support the reduction of greenhouse gas. Can the minister please inform all three parties on the strict rules and regulations that we have put forward about reinvesting our proceeds?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As I've said in the House before, we have some of the highest standards. We have an action plan. We can only spend this on GHG reductions. It's separately accounted for. It's reviewed. The greenhouse gas reduction account manages it. We can only spend it on investments post-2014 that add net new

greenhouse gas emission reductions.

We're very clear, and I'm very proud to be part of a government that is providing global leadership right now on climate change. All of our members support our policy. None of our members on this side are running rogue websites attacking their own party policies, and we believe it has to be revenue-positive for people who are reducing their emissions, for the same reason that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke raised in the House.

Every building has to be retrofitted. Every northerner has to have access to a low-carbon vehicle. Every farmer has to have offsets in their fields to get money and to put greenhouse gas emissions—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HOUSING SERVICES CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Over the last two years, I've asked the minister about outrageous expenses at the Housing Services Corp. He says the problem is solved, because he hired Weiler and Co. to do an independent review, but the review appears to be a long way from independent.

Could the minister tell us whether Dennis Weiler, who made multiple donations to the Liberal Party, is the same Dennis Weiler of Weiler and Co. that did the review, and if Daniel Waterston, who was a senior partner of Weiler and Co., is the same Daniel Waterston who donated thousands to the Liberal Party, was the Minister of Education's CFO in two elections and is married to someone who works in the minister's office?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, with all due respect, that's probably the strangest question I've ever received in the Legislative Assembly. I'll admit quite openly that I don't know any of the people that he mentioned. I don't

know what their giving pattern is, and frankly I don't care, as long as they do what they do within the rules. That's their democratic right as an Ontario citizen.

As for the Housing Services Corp. itself, the honourable member has asked me on, I think, 35 different occasions for a substantive answer, and on all those occasions I have, so I don't have anything more to say.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Weiler and Co. did a review of expenses and didn't even notice the fact that people were using their corporate credit cards to pay for personal expenses, something that has cost many other people in government their jobs. They failed to find the problematic spending that we've raised right here in the Legislature, and they didn't talk to a single housing provider.

How can people have any confidence that the waste and mismanagement of the housing money that has been going on at Housing Services Corp. is solved, Minister, if the Liberal-friendly firm that did the review failed to find even the problems that we knew about already? Is this just another Liberal cover-up?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Before I go to the minister, I'm a little concerned of a pattern that seems to be being created, and that is that you know you're going to be asked to withdraw, but you say it anyway. Get in front of it. Don't say it. It's not acceptable.

Minister?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I spent a good portion of my time as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing trying to put out the fires that the honourable member's party started when they created the Housing Services Corp.

By the way, you had some good ideas when you set it up, and we want to hold onto those good ideas. The concept of the needs of everyone superseding the needs of the one—that's the principle that this was based on. It's a good principle. It was solid then, and it's solid now. We'll continue to walk through whatever little rubble is still there to pick up the pieces and make sure it works even better.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good morning to you, Speaker. My question is to the Premier.

Ontario's steel communities are in crisis, Premier. We know this. These communities are seeing massive financial losses, job losses and mill closures as foreign countries flood the markets. People in Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton are being faced with layoffs and uncertainty. Workers and their families need an economic development plan that works for them.

It seems as though the member from Sault Ste. Marie would rather deflect any demands to his federal cousins in order to address the issue.

Are the Premier and her minister prepared to come to Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton to meet with municipal leaders, steel unions and creditors and work together to determine what measures this government—not the federal one, but this government—should be taking to assist these communities, and put pressure on the federal government to impose tariffs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The issue that the member talks about is a very, very important issue. It takes the NDP to take an important issue like the challenge facing our steel industry in Ontario and across North America and try to turn it into a partisan issue.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this: There is not a member in this House who has gone to bat for the steel industry any harder than the member behind me, the member for Sault Ste. Marie. He talks about it every single day. He talks to me every day about this issue. He knows it's important for the Soo, and he is working with us and our government to encourage the federal government to put in place the measures they need to be able to respond to these dumping challenges in a more effective way. I thank him for his leadership.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Maybe I was in high school, but I remember an NDP government that rolled up their sleeves and got involved with Sault Ste. Marie when it needed help in the past.

By the end of August, the money will run out. Workers' pensions are not secured, and they have already had parts of their benefits cut. Steel communities' cries for help have been falling on the deaf ears of this government. We need action now. We need to work with all stakeholders to ensure that steel communities are not completely devastated.

Will the Premier and her minister stop grandstanding and deflecting to the feds and take action immediately for the people in the steel industry?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member obviously isn't aware, but there's a federal act in this country called the Special Import Measures Act. That's the act under which parties can make applications to the federal government when there are dumping issues happening.

There is no question that there is dumping going on—whether it be from China, India, Russia or other countries—that is severely hurting our steel industry here in Ontario and across North America.

The federal government is aware that there are challenges with the current act. The previous government was—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll try again.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The previous government was aware of this, planned to take action and were too slow to do so. So we're counting on the new government in Ottawa to take the action they need to take in order to respond effectively to these dumping issues.

EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the Minister of Education. One of our top priorities is to support our children with the best possible start in life through our publicly funded education and early-years systems such as full-day kindergarten, which is of great benefit to my daughter and to tens of thousands of other young students.

Our government has made significant gains in all four publicly funded education systems, to provide a strong foundation for our students. This year's budget will focus on getting Ontario on track to a balanced budget in 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: This year's 2016 budget includes key components for education. Can the minister share what things she's doing to continue to improve education for our children?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member for the question. I'm so glad his daughter enjoyed FDK.

We believe that every child in Ontario deserves access to a world-class education and has the right to a supportive learning environment.

This year, in the 2016 budget, we're addressing the recommendations put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We believe that all students, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal, are enriched by learning about the histories, cultures and perspectives of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. As part of the 2016 budget, we're investing \$15 million over three years to develop additional teaching resources, build capacity and provide professional learning for our educators so that they can teach every student about residential schools, treaties and the role of indigenous people in Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to thank the minister for the answer.

We're very proud of the accomplishments and investments we've made in education. In my own riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I was pleased to find out about the funding to expand Norseman Junior Middle School.

I'm also looking forward to hearing about the Grants for Student Needs, which is going to be released at the end of March. This is going to better support students in the classroom.

I was also pleased to hear our government's commitment to ensure that school boards have the support required to successfully integrate Syrian newcomers into Ontario's education system and to make their transition as seamless as possible.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please share with us what is being done to support our Syrian newcomers?

Hon. Liz Sandals: As part of our 2016 budget, we are also updating our enrolment forecast to expand the enrolment, to allow for the children who will be coming from Syria—approximately 4,000 Syrian newcomer children, we think. We're committed to ensuring that school boards have the resources required to support our Syrian newcomers as they enter our education system. We've begun by providing support for detailed initial assessments, to determine our new students' needs. Some of them have come from very challenging situations. We're supporting language and mental health services, to make sure that their transition to our education system is as seamless as possible.

We continue to invest in the well-being of all our students, so that they can all become actively engaged and well-educated citizens.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. In a few minutes, we're going to be voting on the government's budget bill. It will make life in Ontario far more expensive and unaffordable. Tax credits that help children, families and seniors are being eliminated. In fact, 92% of seniors will now pay almost double for their prescription drugs. The price of gasoline; home heating fuel; fees for drivers and vehicles; camping in provincial parks; fishing and hunting licences; event permits—all going up.

But job forecasts are going down. Last year, the government projected that 93,000 jobs would be created this year. Now they're cutting their forecast by 15,000 jobs.

Does the Premier realize that all of the added costs in this budget will reduce disposable income, depress spending and cut jobs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we are going to be doing a vote on the budget bill—a budget that is the most progressive we've had in so many years, that invests in our economy, an economy that is now outpacing and growing and leading Canada, an economy that's creating more jobs than ever before. We have lower unemployment than the national average.

This is a budget that invests in infrastructure, that invests and participates with business to maintain a very dynamic and competitive climate, that invests in our young people. We're providing a tuition that's going to enable more young people to access post-secondary for free, Mr. Speaker. This is a budget that provides social security, retirement security—

Mr. Paul Miller: Thirteen million people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek can hide his voice, but I still hear it.

Please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: This is a budget that enables Ontarians to be more competitive, and it's a long-term vision. The people opposite—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The Liberals have made Ontario the most indebted subnational government on the planet. It took 137 years for this province to reach a debt of \$139 billion when this government took office, but it only took them a dozen years to double that debt and now send it to \$308 billion this year. That means we will be paying almost \$1 billion every month just in interest.

Their waste, mismanagement and scandals are behind every decision they made. It was never what's good for the people; it's always what's good for the Liberal Party. That's why they cut programs for children and seniors, why they doubled the price of drugs and why they're raising the cost of everything.

Speaker, my question is, when is the Premier going to

put the people ahead of herself?

Hon. Charles Sousa: As I was saying, the members opposite are not being progressive at all. What they are showing right now by their very actions is short-term thinking, and they want to go back in time when we had worse conditions and less competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, our net-debt-to-GDP ratio, which is an important measure of our ability to service debt, is actually lower than anticipated—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Before the MaRS scandal, before the Ornge scandal, before the gas plants scandal—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark, come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, our accumulated deficit to GDP is the same today as it was 12 years ago. Our interest on debt today, which the member opposite just made reference to, is at just about 8.9%. When they were in power, it was 15%. It was much higher than it is today.

We are managing our debt. We're investing in infrastructure. We're investing in our communities to make us more competitive, and our economy is growing.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Speaker, as we know, in October, 31 dogs were rescued from a horrible dogfighting ring in Tilbury, where they had been subjected to years of cruel and barbaric treatment. Since their rescue, the OSPCA has filed a court application to have 21 of these dogs euthanized, even though organizations have been lining up with offers to rehabilitate them, in or outside the province.

These dogs have suffered at the hands of humans, yet this government feels the only humane decision is to put them to death. You can stop this. All dogs deserve to be protected.

Will the government grant a special designation and commit to protecting these dogs, instead of condemning them to die?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I will remind the member again, as I did yesterday, that she's asking about a court process which is underway right now involving the

OSPCA. We do understand that this is a challenging issue, and many individuals and organizations are concerned across the province.

But as the member knows, there is currently an application to the court by the OSPCA for permission to euthanize 21 of the 31 pit bull dogs seized from an alleged dogfighting operation, citing risks to public safety. However, the remaining dogs are being rehabilitated for relocation outside the process.

OSPCA, Speaker, as you are well aware and the members are aware, is the organization that is responsible for animal welfare. They have significant expertise in matters relating to animals and their welfare and rehabilitation. They're pursuing a court process. We should respect that process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: These dogs can be rehabilitated. There are experienced and caring organizations lining up for the opportunity, and loving homes to adopt them. Your instinct is that killing these dogs is a better option. At no point should killing these dogs even be an option.

We've had this conversation before. This is the same government that nearly allowed 99 animals to be put down after a ringworm outbreak. Minister, this is the wrong decision again. As long as this government continues to support breed-specific legislation, these dogs will always be at risk.

Will the government do the right thing and work with organizations that actually want to rescue these animals, or is putting them to death your final answer?

1130

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our government takes the care and protection of animals in Ontario very, very seriously. We are proud to have some of the highest standards for animal welfare in Canada. The OSPCA is an independent charitable organization that provides a number of services, such as animal shelters, veterinary and spay/neuter clinics, and public education about animal welfare.

Additionally, the OSPCA act, which is legislation of this House, authorizes OSPCA inspectors and agents to enforce any law pertaining to the welfare of animals. Police may also enforce those laws.

Contrary to the public reports—I want to repeat this again—the government of Ontario does not currently have legislative authority or regulatory authority to direct the OSPCA to take or not to take any particular action. This matter is before the courts. A judge will make a determination. The OSPCA is seeking that approval. We should let the court proceed, based on the law.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Energy. As a proud representative of Northumberland—Quinte West, I know very well that we are blessed with many advantages, living in beautiful rural Ontario. However, there are also some additional challenges.

In rural areas, residents face fewer options when it comes to their energy supply and costs, specifically with heating their homes. Many rural areas do not have access to natural gas and must use alternative methods to heat during cold periods. Many rural residents ask for better alternative options for heating, including extending access to natural gas for rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, I know this government is listening to rural Ontarians and building a plan to help make life easier. Through you to the minister, what action is being taken to benefit rural Ontarians and their energy needs?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for the question. Our government is taking major steps towards providing less expensive home heating for rural communities.

Last year, I wrote to the Ontario Energy Board, asking them to explore opportunities to facilitate access to natural gas. Now the OEB is holding public hearings on how best to recover the costs associated with providing gas to communities that currently do not have access. In fact, Union Gas has already applied for approval to extend natural gas into five rural communities, and they are working with a large number of others.

Also, as mentioned in the 2016 budget, which we're voting on today, our government is developing a \$200-million natural gas access loan program and a \$30-million Natural Gas Economic Development Grant to help communities accelerate their access to natural gas. We're listening to the rural communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister. This government's commitment to expanding access to natural gas in rural communities is incredibly important to rural energy customers.

However, this government is very aware of the current pressures of living in rural communities, and has a number of programs to assist rural customers with the cost of electricity, including the rural and remote electricity rate protection program.

When you look at the proposals in the 2016 budget, the priority to build a smarter, more sustainable and efficient energy system is very clear. Last month, this government introduced investments in measures that will help rural Ontarians save money on their energy bills if they heat through natural gas, oil or propane. The efficiency savings that can come from new technologies and equipment are surprising.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, what initiatives are designed to help rural customers afford their daily energy costs?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Last month, we announced an additional investment of \$100 million through the Green Investment Fund, to help homeowners reduce their energy bills and cut greenhouse gas emissions. We're working with Enbridge and Union Gas to offer the program outside of their service territories and to homeowners who heat their homes with natural gas, oil and propane. This will help about 37,000 more homeowners conduct audits to identify energy-saving opportunities

and then take actions, such as replacing furnaces or water heaters and upgrading insulation.

Secondly, Hydro One has launched a heat pump pilot program to help customers with electric space heating and water heating. If you heat your home by electricity, Hydro One will pay 50% of the cost for an industry-leading air source heat pump, reducing space heating costs by 50%, with savings of \$750 to \$1,500 per year. Hydro One will also pay up to \$800 for a water-heating air source heat pump, reducing water heating costs—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Minister of Energy: The Independent Electricity System Operator just approved a massive wind project in North Stormont, an unwilling host township where the population came together to oppose the wind farm. You just said a few minutes ago that you're listening to rural communities, so why do you allow your agencies to ignore municipal decisions?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The successes today with respect to these announcements is that five wind contracts with an average price of 8.59 cents per kilowatt hour significantly lessen the average price of 2009 for a large feed-in tariff; seven solar contracts with an average price of 15.67 cents per kilowatt hour, 28 cents less—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you can look directly at me and start the heckling, you should have stopped. The member from Leeds-Grenville, second time.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —28 cents less per kilowatt hour. But most importantly, in addition to these successes of lower prices, there are great achievements and support for these projects. More than 80% of the projects include participation from one or more aboriginal communities—five projects with 50%. More than 75% of successful proposals receive support from local municipalities, and more than 60%—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the minister: The community took you at your word. They turned down \$650,000 a year, a bribe by the company if they would become a willing host. Now they have the project and they don't have the money. How do you explain that to them, somebody that trusted this government and somebody that just got burned?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I heard that there were negotiations between the municipality and the proponent. Ontario is securing a future in clean, reliable and affordable electricity. We already benefit from 90% emissions-free electricity generated by a diverse supply of generation

sources, including wind, solar, nuclear, hydroelectricity and bioenergy.

Today's results and these contracts confirm that wind and solar power are now on a level playing field with other forms of generation. By putting emphasis on price and the support of host communities, today's results put further downward pressure on electricity price projections in Ontario's Long-Term Energy Plan. Today builds on our success over the past 10 years and moving forward to a greener energy system.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move to the deferred votes, I have an announcement: This is the last day for our pages. I want to say to them, on your behalf, thank you for a job well done. We appreciate it very much.

DEFERRED VOTES

JOBS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT LA CRÉATION D'EMPLOIS POUR AUJOURD'HUI ET DEMAIN (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes / Projet de loi 173, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On February 29, 2016, Mr. Sousa moved second of Bill 173. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville Baker, Yvan Balkissoon, Bas Ballard, Chris Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bradley, James J. Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe Dong, Han Duguid, Brad

Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fraser, John Gravelle, Michael Hoggarth, Ann Hoskins, Eric Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France Leal, Jeff MacCharles, Tracy Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Martins, Cristina Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McGarry, Kathryn McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z. Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Naqvi, Yasir Orazietti, David Potts, Arthur Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Vernile, Daiene Wong, Soo Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
DiNovo, Cheri
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine

Forster, Cindy

French, Jennifer K. Gélinas, France Hardeman, Ernie Hatfield, Percy Hillier, Randy Jones, Sylvia Mantha, Michael Martow, Gila McDonell, Jim Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Munro, Julia Pettapiece, Randy Sattler, Peggy Scott, Laurie Smith, Todd Tabuns, Peter Taylor, Monique Thompson, Lisa M. Vanthof, John Walker, Bill Wilson, Jim

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 33.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 9, 2016, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On March 1, 2016, Mr. Gravelle moved second reading of Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas.

Mr. Fraser has moved that the question be now put. All those in favour of Mr. Fraser's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville Baker, Yvan Balkissoon, Bas Ballard, Chris Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bradley, James J. Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe

Flynn, Kevin Daniel Fraser, John Gravelle, Michael Hoggarth, Ann Hoskins, Eric Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France Leal, Jeff MacCharles, Tracy Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Martins, Cristina Matthews, Deborah

Mauro, Bill

McMeekin, Ted Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z. Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Nagvi, Yasir Potts, Arthur Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Vernile, Daiene Wong, Soo Wynne, Kathleen O.

Dong, Han Duguid, Brad McGarry, Kathryn McMahon, Eleanor

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
DiNovo, Cheri
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy

French, Jennifer K. Gélinas, France Hardeman, Ernie Hatfield, Percy Hillier, Randy Jones, Sylvia Mantha, Michael Martow, Gila McDonell, Jim Miller, Norm Miller, Paul Munro, Julia Pettapiece, Randy Sattler, Peggy Scott, Laurie Smith, Todd Tabuns, Peter Taylor, Monique Thompson, Lisa M. Vanthof, John Walker, Bill

Wilson, Jim

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 52; the nays are 33.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Gravelle has moved second reading of Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye." All those opposed, please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell. *The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anderson, Granville Armstrong, Teresa J. Baker, Yvan Balkissoon, Bas Ballard, Chris Berardinetti, Lorenzo Bisson, Gilles Bradley, James J. Chan, Michael Chiarelli, Bob Colle, Mike Coteau, Michael Crack, Grant Damerla, Dipika Del Duca, Steven Delaney, Bob Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe DiNovo, Cheri Dong, Han Duguid, Brad Fife, Catherine

Flynn, Kevin Daniel Forster, Cindy Fraser, John French, Jennifer K. Gélinas, France Gravelle, Michael Hatfield, Percy Hoggarth, Ann Hoskins, Eric Hunter, Mitzie Jaczek, Helena Kiwala, Sophie Lalonde, Marie-France Leal Jeff MacCharles, Tracy Malhi, Harinder Mangat, Amrit Mantha, Michael Martins Cristina Matthews, Deborah Mauro, Bill McGarry, Kathryn

McMahon, Eleanor McMeekin Ted Meilleur, Madeleine Milczyn, Peter Z. Miller, Paul Moridi, Reza Murray, Glen R. Naidoo-Harris, Indira Nagvi, Yasir Potts, Arthur Qaadri, Shafiq Rinaldi, Lou Sandals, Liz Sattler, Peggy Sergio, Mario Sousa, Charles Tabuns, Peter Taylor, Monique Vanthof, John Vernile, Daiene Wong, Soo

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted Barrett, Toby Brown, Patrick Clark, Steve Coe, Lorne Fedeli, Victor Hardeman, Ernie Hillier, Randy Jones, Sylvia Martow, Gila McDonell, Jim Miller, Norm Munro, Julia Pettapiece, Randy Scott, Laurie Smith, Todd Thompson, Lisa M. Walker, Bill Wilson, Jim

Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 19.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: To general government, please.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): General government. So ordered.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Energy concerning a North Stormont wind farm. The matter will be debated Tuesday, March 22, at 6 p.m.

There are no further deferred votes. I offer my best wishes to all members to enjoy themselves, get a chance to be with their families and also do the constituency work that they always do.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. *The House recessed from 11:56 to 1300.*

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: I have two very important guests visiting Queen's Park today: Janice Barr and her daughter Emma Barr. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here today.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to welcome the arrival of the grade 5 students at R.L. Graham, which is in my riding in Keswick, soon to arrive under the leadership of teachers Margaret DaCosta and Jane Mundy.

A further person who needs an introduction, in my opinion, is a former student of mine who was here with her son.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to introduce a friend of mine who is visiting us this afternoon. Richard Wyma is the general manager and the CEO at ERCA, the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a number of guests here today. They're here in support of my private member's bill coming up a little later on. I have, from the Canadian Cancer Society, Zachary Nichols; from Prostate Cancer Canada, Rocco Rossi; from the Ontario Lung Association, Chris Yaccato; from Global Public Affairs on behalf of the Canadian Men's Health Foundation, Rod Elliot; and, representing the Canadian Centre for Men and Families, Justin Trottier, David Cunningham, Karen Glen, Robert Samery, Eleanor Levine, Geoff Stone and Denise Fong. Welcome, all, to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased, also, to ask for everyone's warm welcome to Mike Walters, the CAO of Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority. Thank you.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to introduce today, in the members' east gallery, three people from the Grand River Conservation Authority: Chair Helen Jowett, Lisa Stocco and Keith Murch. Welcome to Oueen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DANI

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm here today to talk about a wonderful organization called DANI. Originally, I thought, like many of you are going to think, that it's about somebody named Dani, but it isn't. It stands for Developing and Nurturing Independence. Their mission statement says, "To create opportunities for young adults with physical and/or cognitive challenges so that they can participate fully as valued members of the community and enjoy a meaningful and dignified quality of life."

DANI was created in 2006 by parents of children with disabilities, co-founded by Susie Sokol and Kathy Laszlo. It started as a parent-to-parent advocacy group and became an incorporated, not-for-profit organization. Their core beliefs are that it is parent-driven and dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities, and families and caregivers. They strive to enhance the skills and knowledge of young adults with challenges and establish and maintain partnerships. They're inclusive, meaning everybody is welcome to participate, but they do observe kashrut—which means kosher—food, Shabbat and holidays.

I just want to mention that this Monday, March 14, we're going to have a walk from my constituency to DANI's facility at a local community centre, the Garnet on Clark Avenue. We're going to have lunch there, served by the participants of DANI. I'm really looking forward to it. Everybody can join. I hope to see you all there. It's just going to be \$15 a person—I should mention that—but it will be well worth your time and effort.

POVERTY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The Liberals say they're starting to chart a path towards a comprehensive reform plan designed to reduce poverty. During his budget presentation, the minister said they would be joining with researchers and select communities to develop a basic income pilot project.

Speaker, I want to offer the Windsor and Essex county region as an ideal site for such an experiment. The cold, hard facts to justify this offer are these: One third of our single mums live in poverty; one out of every 10 people you pass on the streets in Windsor and Essex county lives in poverty; one out of every six children lives in poverty;

our multiple food banks serve about one third of their meals to children; more than a third of our seniors are living on less than \$20,000 a year; 70,000 people in our area who do have jobs are earning less than \$20,000, and more than 30,000 of those folks are college or university graduates; we have suffered with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country for the past 10 years; we've lost 10,000 young people who have left for jobs in other parts of the country; 24% of our population identify themselves as immigrants, yet many of our newcomers face economic challenges; we have as many as 9,500 people on social assistance and 2,600 on the waiting list for subsidized housing, and we need as much help as we can get.

There is no better place in Ontario to test this new method of a basic income allowance.

SHEILA WARD

Ms. Soo Wong: I rise today to recognize and remember a former colleague, trustee and chair of the Toronto District School Board, Sheila Ward.

Sheila represented Toronto Centre-Rosedale since 1991. She was elected trustee again after the Mike Harris government amalgamated six education boards in Toronto to create the TDSB in 1997. She had either been reelected or acclaimed since then. Sheila was the chair of the TDSB from 2003 to 2007.

Throughout Sheila's tenure as a public school trustee, she championed equity, including the creation of a senior position at the TDSB focusing on student and community equity.

I fondly remember Sheila's courage and determination in the establishment of the Triangle Program, an alternative education program in the former Toronto Board of Education. This 20-year-old alternative program, located in east Chinatown, is the only program of its kind in Canada. It is designed for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students who are at risk of dropping out or committing suicide because of homophobic and transphobic harassment in regular schools.

Inside and outside the boardroom, Sheila used her wit, sharp tongue, analytical skills and determination to champion the youngest citizens in her community. This included pressuring staff to redesign for more green spaces for students, or expanding the libraries and science and technology classrooms in her diverse, innercity schools.

Sheila is also remembered for being a kind, caring and committed friend and mentor to many, including our Premier, Minister Coteau and Toronto budget chief Councillor Crawford.

Many of us who knew Sheila will remember her passion and feistiness, never backing down on important issues affecting her students, and bringing multiple bottles of Coke to every board or committee meeting.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude my remarks, I want to share Sheila's own words on education: "I am glad that others are willing to spend their time looking after potholes, sewers and snow plowing. Those are essential and important tasks but for me education is where I want to serve my community...."

Thank you, Sheila, for your contributions to public education. You have touched many lives, including mine, and you will be missed. Here's to you, Sheila.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You did that nicely enough so that the Sergeant-at-Arms didn't steal your prop. Thank you.

LEO McARTHUR

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise to pay tribute to a courageous entrepreneur, a generous philanthropist and a great visionary who personified the very best of Canadian values. Leo McArthur, who rose to prominence as president, CEO and chairman of the board of the Miller Group and was among the first rank of entrepreneurs of his generation, sadly, passed away on January 11 after a long illness.

Leo and his partner, John Carrick, started out with nothing but an idea, a strong work ethic, a belief in private business and a friendship. Over many years, they led the Miller Group and McAsphalt Industries, and expanded into an international group of companies that employed more than 4,000 people. Leo was one of the most successful businessmen to ever have come out of the Owen Sound area.

Nothing was more important to Leo than family and his employees, who were indeed an important part of the McArthur family. As such, his legacy was not measured by the fact that he built one of the largest waste management companies in Canada; it was that throughout his life, Leo was an influential ambassador and a major contributor to the communities where he lived and worked.

1310

Most recently, Leo and his family-owned company contributed in excess of \$1 million to the new Owen Sound YMCA and community recreation centre in honour of Leo and Helen McArthur's daughter, Julie McArthur, who died in 2007.

Leo came from a very loving family but also from very poor beginnings. His dad ran a lumber mill in Owen Sound and died in an industrial accident when Leo was only nine years old, leaving behind eight children. Fortunately, the McArthur children inherited the belief that integrity, hard work and loyalty mattered in life. It was these qualities that helped them build an entrepreneurial family. His brother J.D. owned McArthur Tire and the Owen Sound Greys hockey team, Johnny owned McArthur Construction, and Timber McArthur and his brother-in-law Al Reilly owned McArthur and Reilly, a home decorating business.

I know the Legislature will join me in acknowledging the great contribution that Leo McArthur has made to Ontario and to Canada and extend our condolences to his family.

Thank you for the difference you have made in so many lives, Leo. You will be truly missed.

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Catherine Fife: On April 5, 1951, Ontario's first equal-pay legislation became law. In spite of the fact that it was a male-dominated House, the Legislature had a champion for this bill: Agnes Macphail, one of Ontario's first two female MPPs, who was a driving force behind the creation of the Female Employees Fair Remuneration Act, which became the first step towards correcting the pay gap. Far ahead of a time when it was a popular topic, she had a strong sense of what the female workforce deserved. She said, "I want for myself what I want for other women: absolute equality."

I rise today during Women's History Month to acknowledge the work done by women like Agnes Macphail who have come before us in this House, but much more needs to be done to honour their legacy. It has been 65 years since this province's first equal-pay legislation and almost 30 years since Ontario's current Pay Equity Act was introduced. Yet today, in 2016, we are still working to close the gender wage gap. There is a 31.5% pay difference between men and women, and it has barely changed in the last decade. It affects all women at every age of every profession. Not only that; Canadian women earn on average \$8,000 less than their male counterparts who are doing the exact same jobs. This is twice the global average of a wage gap for equivalent work.

As an assembly with 37 talented, hard-working female MPPs, we can and we need to do better to support the women of Ontario.

HAZEL McCALLION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: This afternoon, I rise to honour a leading woman from Mississauga, former mayor Hazel McCallion. Even after her retirement from political life, Hazel, whom we affectionately call Hurricane Hazel, continues to tirelessly serve the public.

On February 23, I was pleased to attend the announcement of Ms. McCallion's appointment as Sheridan College's inaugural chancellor. Sheridan College is an important symbol of what the cities of Mississauga and Brampton are today: excellent places to live, work, play, raise families, study, and invest. The college brings with it the promise of an even brighter future. In Ms. McCallion's own words, the college is "part of the community," including from "an economic point of view." It is an incubator for young minds, talents and ideas. It is a private sector partner in research and development.

As chancellor, Ms. McCallion will preside over convocation and also serve as an ambassador for Sheridan locally, nationally and internationally. Congratulations, Chancellor McCallion.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: I rise today to draw attention to the cuts that are occurring at the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre. While this hospital is in Barrie, it serves many of my constituents, and these cuts impact people from both Simcoe and Muskoka.

As a result of an \$8-million shortfall, RVH will be eliminating 24 vacant positions as well as 32 full-time positions. Cuts like these are a direct result of the Liberal government's track record of scandal, waste and economic mismanagement.

Health care has always been the provincial government's most important responsibility. Consistently, it has been the most important issue for my constituents. RVH is one of many hospitals in Ontario who are faced with the growing challenge of how to do more with less, how to better serve patients with fewer staff, how to better serve families with less resources.

This government has never demonstrated serious leadership on improvements to health care. Photo ops and reannouncements don't measure up.

RVH's wait times for MRI and CT scans are both higher than the provincial average. It's inevitable that wait times will increase and patients will languish on wait-lists for important tests and surgeries. This is unacceptable for my constituents and it's unacceptable for the province.

MINING INDUSTRY CONVENTION

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Earlier this week, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada hosted a major four-day conference in Toronto. The annual PDAC International Convention, Trade Show and Investors Exchange is the world's leading convention for people, companies and organizations in, or connected with, mineral exploration. The convention provides an excellent opportunity to meet and attend technical sessions, short courses and various networking events for the mining community.

This year, the convention welcomed over 20,000 delegates and 1,000 exhibitors from over 100 countries to downtown Toronto.

Every year, PDAC provides us with an opportunity to showcase mining exploration and development in Ontario to the rest of the world. For Ontario, it means promoting our province as a global leader and the most attractive jurisdiction for mineral investment in Canada.

For another year, Ontario's Ministry of Northern Development and Mines was the largest exhibitor at PDAC. We welcomed guests to our annual reception and met hundreds of delegates from around the world at our Ontario pavilion on the trade floor.

We have over 40 mines operating in the province, making us Canada's largest producer of non-fuel minerals. And last year, we saw the value of mineral production reach \$10.8 billion in Ontario. That's almost double the amount in 2003.

PDAC provided an excellent platform for our government to share our success story when it comes to mining in Ontario.

We look forward to next year's convention, and I hope to see you all there.

FASHION HISTORY MUSEUM

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: The Fashion History Museum grand opening ceremony is this evening in Cambridge, to celebrate their new premises in the old 1929 Galt post office building.

The Fashion History Museum has become a destination for tourists, both local as well as from across Ontario.

Founded in 2004 by chair and CEO Kenn Norman and curator Jonathan Walford, the museum has gained an international reputation. As a matter of fact, they have showcased collections in Bahrain, Hong Kong and across North America. Their adapted heritage building is a permanent home for a fabulous collection of over 12,000 garments and 3,000 titles in the library and archives, featuring shoes, hats, accessories, vintage clothing, rare pieces, and includes some from Canadian designers. This collection has pieces from the mid-1700s to the present day, and the displays are constantly changing.

Recently, the museum held their Chapeaux et Champagne fundraiser, which featured a fine collection of unique hats, both old and new.

Next February, at their fundraiser, you'll see a one-day exhibit of Dior pieces. As a matter of fact, they were included in the 2017 special anniversary publication from the house of Dior in Paris.

At last year's Politics of Fashion, Fashion of Politics event, they featured a rare paper Pierre Trudeau dress made for the 1968 campaign.

Speaker, this is a fabulous exhibit. It's a truly inspired museum. I want to congratulate Kenn and Jonathan for their huge success, and I also want to thank the city of Cambridge for helping to support this incredible destination.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Ms. Damerla moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 178, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce the Smoke-Free Ontario Act as amended to provide for prescribed products and substances, in addition to tobacco, to enable us to regulate the smoking of medical marijuana.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY WEEK

Hon. Jeff Leal: I rise in the House today in recognition of Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, which takes place next week, from March 13 to 19.

This annual week-long public education campaign focuses on the importance of safety practices on Canadian farms. It encourages and reminds individuals, organizations and communities to do their part to ensure that Ontario's farms are safe places to live, work and, indeed, raise a family.

I'm proud to stand with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture in recognizing important on-farm safety programming. Additionally, we're pleased to support Workplace Safety and Prevention Services of Ontario in their delivery of farm education programs across this province. These important organizations seek to empower producers and their farmlies with the information resources they need to make their farms safe.

This is the first year of a three-year program with the theme Be an AgSafe Family. This year, our theme is Keeping Kids Safe, focusing on encouraging children and young adults to remember to stay safe while helping out with chores or responsibilities on their respective farms. In 2017, the spotlight will shift to adult safety and, in 2018, the theme will be seniors on the farm.

Organizers have put together a kickoff event at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre on Tuesday, March 15. This event will have fun and education activities for kids aged eight to 12 and for the whole family.

It's a sad reality that fatal accidents happen on Ontario farms every day, devastating families and businesses. Most of these accidents are preventable, and the responsibility for making Ontario farms safe lies with all of us: individuals, organizations and communities. Producers, farm managers and farm workers have to understand the hazards on their farms and how to mitigate and manage them.

Mr. Speaker, a short time ago I paid a visit to Classy Lane Stables, which suffered a devastating fire a short time ago, to meet with the individuals there, to see how their lives have changed forever due to a barn fire.

Our primary agricultural sector in Ontario employs more than 86,000 people, and all of us in this House have a solemn duty to ensure that each and every one of them works in a safe environment.

I'd like to thank the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, Workplace Safety and Prevention Services and every organization that supports this initiative for their tireless efforts to improve safety on Canadian and Ontarian farms.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week is about doing the right thing to protect our farm workers and our farm families so they can continue their excellent work to produce the good things that are grown, harvested and made right here in Ontario.

I encourage all of Ontario's farm businesses, workers and communities to embrace the spirit of this year's campaign, Be an AgSafe Family, and make our farms a safe place to work, live and, indeed, raise a family.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this very important subject.

Another year has passed, and we've had more farm tragedies, despite the heightened awareness programs and safety messaging. Regrettably, Ontario has the unfortunate designation of having the most farm accidents in Canada. To be fair, we have the largest number of farmers as well.

One of the real dangers for many is that the farm is also the home, so not only are people working on the farm in danger, but also other family members and, in particular, children. Last year was no exception to the sad trend of deaths of farmers' children. This is the largest tragedy, and we must do whatever is possible to deal with this.

Every year—and it doesn't seem to change—we hear of tractor rollovers, entrapment in flowing grain, death from silo gas or manure gas, and PTO accidents. I was speaking with the member for Perth—Wellington. He grew up on an Essex county fruit and vegetable operation. This is really scary: Randy Pettapiece was caught in a PTO—power take-off shaft—twice. That's 540 rpm, and the newer equipment is like double that. His foot got caught once, and he ended up losing his boot and his sock. He was fortunate.

Another time, he was on top of the other end of a grain auger—a grain elevator—trying to unplug, and his shirt got caught. His dad didn't see it in time to shut down the equipment, and it ripped his shirt off. This equipment is really scary. There's much more regulation and requirement for cover shields—safety shields.

I will mention—as with Randy when he's working on the farm—that I don't wear rings. I've never worn rings. They get caught in things. Believe it or not, when I work on the farm, especially in the spring and fall, my partner and I wear very, very old clothing. It's clothing that's almost rags, almost rotten—it's an odd thing to say this—because if something gets caught, it rips off. The sleeve will rip off instead of your arm ripping off.

When I say that, I think of a gentleman—I'm one of the past presidents of our local Norfolk Farm Safety Association. I attended a presentation by a farmer named Ken Kelly, upcountry from here, and he has a steel claw. He talked about how prices were very bad back then in the 1970s. He talked about the stress. He had to lay off his hired man. He was working twice as long, working at night, working in the rain, working in the mud. He got his arm caught in a power take-off. He explained to us, after that happened, "You think you have problems with your farm and with farm labour and dealing with prices and dealing with stress"—stress is a big factor because of overwork and exhaustion. "Once that happens to you, all those problems disappear. You've just got one problem: You've lost your arm, and you're dealing with that."

On top of these traditional dangers on the farm—it's probably one of the most dangerous occupations—new threats are developing, and the book put out by the Farm Safety Association contains the fact sheets. They've also identified the danger of West Nile virus, one of the new, emerging vector-borne infectious diseases transmitted by mosquitoes. This particular disease, like Lyme disease, was not prevalent back when I was involved with farm safety. I give the association credit for addressing this threat as well.

Farmers, like outdoors people, hunters, fishermen and people who work outside in the forest industry and construction, are oftentimes in a low, wet area. You're exposed to not only mosquitos for West Nile; you're exposed to the ticks that have moved into this area, which carry with them Lyme disease.

1330

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further responses? Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and today to recognize farm safety week, which is next week.

Farm safety is a pretty personal matter to a lot of farmers. One of the inherent great things about family farms is that the family is involved. That's also one of the inherent dangers. It's a hard balance. I know that on our farm, we took all kinds of steps to make sure that it was as safe as possible. But still, there were close calls. I'm not going to go into a litany of what happens on farms all the time.

Also, the thing about farm work that's different than almost every other occupation is that it doesn't go by a rhythm. Not only is it not 9 to 5, but there are times when you have to work all night. I can tell you a personal story. I had a very serious farm accident, but I'm not going to talk about that one. I almost had a second one after I was an MPP. I got home at 11 o'clock in the morning on a Friday, and we were putting in straw. Everything was going well, and at about 10 or 11 o'clock that night, there was no dew. You don't need the weather channel: A farmer knows that if there's no dew, it's going to rain. So we were going. And at about 1 o'clock in the morning—I had a serious accident years ago and I spent a long time in the hospital. It's because I grabbed the PTO shaft when I shouldn't have. At about 1 o'clock in the morning—the way it works is that you shut the PTO off, you take the shaft off the tractor and hook it on the wagon. But you're tired at 1 o'clock in the morning, and I thought I shut the PTO off; I didn't, and I grabbed that

shaft again. I told my staff and my son, "That's it. We're shutting it down."

And do you know what? We lost a lot of straw the next day, because it rained and it rained and it rained. But those are the things that make farming different. For many, especially when you're young, it's not a case of just hiring extra staff, because you don't have the money to hire the extra staff. That's why I had the accident in the first place. We rebuilt the barn. We killed ourselves working. We had a party the night before I had my accident. We had a party to thank all the neighbours who had helped us. The party went late because these people helped us build the barn. The next morning, I went to the barn to milk the cows at 6 o'clock, and at 9 o'clock I walked back to the house and said, "You'd better call an ambulance." I wasn't seen in the barn again for three months. Should I have had somebody else to milk the cows the next day? Sure. But there was no money to do that. We risked everything to go ahead.

My last point—and this is going to sound like we're a very accident-prone family. My dad died in a farm accident. He did something wrong: He got onto a tractor when it was running. The gearshift was here, and he hit the gearshift—I saw it happen; in the distance, I saw it happen—and the tractor hit him and I saw him die. My dad made a mistake, but if that gearshift had been locked, it wouldn't have happened. I went to the tractor company, I went to the farm implements board, and they all said the same thing: "Well, your dad made a mistake." I wasn't arguing that.

They sent me a letter that said, "Your dad made a mistake." It was a farmer who sent me the letter that said, "You should never go onto a running"—I might take a couple of seconds more. "You should never get onto a tractor that's operating." I said, "You're a farmer, right? A dairy farmer?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Okay, so when you're blowing your silo full, do you have somebody sitting on the blower?" He said, "Hell, no." I said, "Well, how did the guy get on and off that tractor? When you're running a grain auger, do you have somebody sitting on that tractor?" "Of course not." "Well, how did he get off? How did he get on? When you're running a generator, do you have somebody"—and he said no. That's as far as it went.

I was young; I was busy. A couple of years later, because I'd written to the farm implements board, I got a call from a lawyer in Texas, and I made a deposition. A 12-year-old kid had gone to shut off the grain auger, and what they figured was that as he was getting on, he hit that gearshift and it killed him. And then the company changed the tractors.

So it's not just farmers and it's not just nature, and it's not just enough to say, "You can't get on a running tractor," because there are times—I'm really glad the minister is here—when it's unavoidable, and the rules and regulations have to reflect that.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's a health care petition, and it reads:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I sign this petition and support it.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

"Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

"Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types."

In honour of the 21 dogs that face death at the OSPCA, I sign this and give it to Richard to be delivered to the table.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province;

"Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

"Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment;

"Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and the province of Ontario."

I affix my name to this petition and I give it to page Suzanne.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with the contents. I'll affix my signature and hand it to the page.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Better Mental Health Services.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures; and 1340

"Whereas one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them; and

"Whereas mental illness is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death in Canada; and

"Whereas the cost of mental health and addictions to the Ontario economy is \$34 billion; and

"Whereas the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions made 22 recommendations in their final report; and

"Whereas the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to implement all 22 ... recommendations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, which:

"(1) Brings all mental health services in the province under one ministry, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"(2) Establishes a single body to design, manage and coordinate all mental health and addictions systems throughout the province;

"(3) Ensures that programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario;

"(4) Grants the Ombudsman full powers to audit or investigate providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario."

Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this petition and sign it and give it to page Micah to deliver.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I support the petition and give my petition to page Ryan.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Reverse the cuts to health care:

"(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

"(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health

care system for the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature and give it to page Richard from my riding. Yay, Richard.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition from the good people of my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission ... has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually"—much more; "and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and send it down with page Sarah.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from residents in Toronto.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short vears from now:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41 ... through ... to third and final reading; and ... to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this, affix my signature and send it down to the table with Suzanne.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially those on fixed incomes; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms....;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I agree with this petition and will be passing it on to page Bianca.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, affix my name and will give it to page Andrew to take to the table.

ELDER ABUSE

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: "Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

"Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

"Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse;

"Whereas research showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members;

"Whereas financial and emotional abuse are the most frequently reported elder abuse cases;

"Whereas current Ontario legislation incorporates the Residents' Bill of Rights, mandates abuse prevention, investigation and reporting of seniors living in either long-term-care facilities or retirement homes;

"Whereas the majority of the seniors currently and in the future live in the community;

"Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will ensure seniors living in the community have the same protection and support as those seniors living in long-term-care facilities and retirement homes;

"Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, requiring health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office."

I agree with this petition, affix my name and give it to page Luke from Barrie.

1350

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and "Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I have affixed my signature as I am in agreement and give it to page Charlotte.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ DES HOMMES

Mr. Potts moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 170, An Act to proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June as Men's Health Awareness Week / Projet de loi 170, Loi proclamant la semaine précédant le troisième dimanche de juin Semaine de la sensibilisation à la santé des hommes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to be able to rise in the House to speak to Bill 170 today. It seems only about a year and a half ago that I had the chance to speak to second reading of my first private member's bill, the tipping bill. I'd like to remind members that we were able to get it to committee, the social policy committee, with unanimous consent. We made a few adjustments and it came back to the House for third reading and was approved by the House in the middle of December, just before we rose. That bill will go into effect on June 15, 2016. I was delighted at the fact that we had the unanimous support of the House on my first private member's bill, and I was delighted that the House leaders were able to get together and find a way to move the bill forward.

I think I've found another bill here that will also encourage the unanimous support of this House so that we can see it be proclaimed in due time, hopefully, in time for the week following the third week in June, because the third Sunday in June, as you all know, is Father's Day. What I'm hoping to do with this bill—it's a very

simple bill—is that that week prior to Father's Day we would recognize as Men's Health Awareness Week.

It takes a lot of work, as I know all members know, to bring a bill like this together, to reach out to stakeholders and pull together the information that people want to use for the debate, and so I wanted to say thank you to my staff. My staff, I'm sure, are watching on various closed-circuit TVs here or back in the constituency office: David Bellmore, who has done fantastic work in bringing this forward, as have Tom McGee and Kimberly Aherne, to make sure that the bill was able to move forward as speedily as possible. Thanks also to the member who's immediately in front of me—Glengarry—Prescott—Russell—who swapped his ballot item with me in order for me to do this now.

This new bill will deserve the unanimous support of the House because what it seeks to address is a chronic failing in men to look after themselves. When I first mentioned the idea to the Premier—I was sitting down beside her during a break in proceedings—her first response was, "Yes, men don't really go to see the doctor very often, do they?" There's a universal truth in that, it seems. It seems to be a proclivity that men have that we're brought up thinking we don't need the help of others. As a result, we don't see the doctor as often as we should. Maybe this will be an opportunity during this week where men will take that time to look after their own personal health.

The idea to do this bill first came to me from the Canadian Men's Health Foundation. I met with Wayne Hartrick, who unfortunately can't be here. The foundation is based in Vancouver, and he has been in a couple of times with the founder, Dr. Larry Goldenberg. They couldn't be here today for the second reading, but they were here for the first reading and we had a media conference beforehand.

When they introduced to me what they were hoping to see happen, I felt as if they were speaking to me directly. I felt that maybe I'm one of those guys who should probably take a little time out once in a while to think about their own personal health, how they're running their life and what they're doing to make sure that they have healthy outcomes.

What it really reminded me of was what I hear from my mother so very, very often. My mother, Dawn Potts—I have mentioned her here before; she's 87 years of age—says to me repeatedly, and to the other members of my family, "I wish your father had taken better care of himself."

I know what she means by that. Dad died when he was about 81, almost 10 years ago. He lived large. He was a very active man—a judge, lawyer, socialite and member of the bar association—and he lived long and hard. But my mother wishes that he had taken better care of himself. When I mentioned that to her, she said, "Well, you should take the same advice," encouraging me to also take a look at how I'm living and see if I can't do it better.

Dr. Larry Goldenberg, a urologist out of Vancouver—just imagine the scenario: you're a urologist and you're

dealing with men's prostate cancer on a regular basis, and you know in your heart that this is a very preventable disease, with the right kinds of diet and exercise and other things. It must be extraordinarily frustrating to a doctor to be in that circumstance and to be practising his craft, knowing that it's a preventable disease, so he invented the foundation. He founded this organization, the Canadian Men's Health Foundation, in order to have men take a better look at what they're doing.

It reminds me somewhat of a conversation I overheard in the Calgary airport many years ago when smoking was permitted in airports. I was sitting at a bar, having a beer between flights, and a gentleman two over from me started up a cigarette and immediately turned to the gentleman sitting between us and said, "Is it okay if I smoke?" He was being considerate. I thought that was quite nice. The gentleman between us said, "Yes, go ahead. It's good for business." The man looked at him and said, "Do you work for Rothmans or something?" He said, "No, I'm an oncologist."

It's a bit of black humour, of course, Speaker, but it speaks to the fact that, yes, it would be good for business

if people didn't look after themselves.

I think Dr. Goldenberg understands that that's not his focus. He founded this association in order to get to the heart of what it is that causes men's bodies to decay in a way that they shouldn't.

I also mentioned the opportunity of this bill to my daughter Robin. Robin is a very intelligent woman in her late twenties who now works for OCAD University. Her first response was, "Wow, Dad, do you really want to be a middle-aged male standing up and looking for men to get special treatment? You should really test this idea with others, particularly in the women's advocacy area, to see if this is going to ruffle feathers and be of concern."

I took her advice. I've spoken with a number of health care providers, people at women's agencies, people in public health and, quite happily, to my surprise and hers, this was a recognition that men should spend a little extra time looking after their own health because, in doing so, they become better fathers; they become better husbands, spouses and partners; they become better sons. It's really about family health, not necessarily just men's health but family health. Healthy men help lead to healthier families.

The Canadian Men's Health Foundation is championing this. I'm delighted to see that they have a number of really high-profile champions assisting them as they move this forward. We have Brendan Shanahan, who is the president and alternate governor of the Toronto Maple Leafs. He's putting his name, reputation and energy behind this project.

Adam Kreek—Adam was here when I did my first reading presser. He's an Olympic gold medallist in rowing and an incredibly inspirational public speaker. He came. Here's a guy who understands health, healthy eating and healthy activity, and he is bringing that message to men across Canada.

And then there's Simon Whitfield, a four-time Olympian gold medallist, probably the highest-decorated Canadian triathlete, and he's bringing his reputation—as well as Dr. Tony Finelli, who is an associate professor of urology at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.

This is the kind of group that they're pulling together in order to assist in bringing this message home about men's health.

They've also got partners. The British Columbia government has made a very generous grant to the organization. They're seeking additional supporting money from the province of Ontario, and I will support them in that effort as best as I can. Sun Life Financial has put significant funds into this, the Canadian Urological Association and Sportsnet. The Public Health Agency of Canada has invested in the program, as has the Canadian Mental Health Association. So it's a widespread group of people who are recognizing the importance of men taking a step out and looking after their health.

1400

The Canadian Men's Health Foundation has an app where you can go on your smart phone and answer a bunch of questions, and it will do a metric of what kind of lifestyle they think you're leading and what your risks are. It can be done confidentially. I did it, and there were some warning signs there that I might want to take to heart. They have determined that something in the order of 70% of people who use this app make changes in their life—not significant changes, just a little change. That's part of their model for their big campaign that they want to roll out during that week before Father's Day: for men to make small changes. I was at a hockey game recently and there, on the big screen at the MLSE, was an ad that they've done about men making small changes. A man opens a fridge door, reaches in to get a beer and says, "Maybe I'll have a bottle of water instead." It's sort of a sense that we just want to step back and make small changes in our lives for healthier outcomes.

I have a constituent named Dr. Nigel Turner. He's a psychologist who specializes in men's issues. He wished he could be here, but he wrote in and I want to read into the record his comments: "This is a wonderful idea for men to move off that men should know better, to a more realistic and humane perception that men don't know enough about their health, which they take for granted, and as a result they die sooner than they need to." Dr. Turner runs an organization called Just for Today, and he has an alternative therapy program for men who are coming out of domestic abuse situations. Let's be clear: There's never any justification for domestic abuse, but sometimes men who find themselves in those situations are suffering from addictions or anger management issues. His program tries to step back with men, that before making men in that situation plead guilty to a charge, to make it conditional to go through his program, rather than the Partner Assault Response Program, in order to help them make changes in their lives which will make them be better partners.

I'm delighted that we have Rocco Rossi in the crowd today, Speaker. I've known Rocco a long time. I know

him as the "wise guy" who ran for mayor of Toronto not too long ago. He was executive director of the Heart and Stroke Foundation back when, and currently is the executive director of Prostate Cancer Canada. A good friend of mine, Al Stuart, was involved with Rocco back when he tried to establish a new program for fundraising. He was going to call it "Prostrate for Prostate," the idea being that men should just go to sleep on the couch and people should sign up to pay for them to do that. That campaign didn't quite take off, but the latest campaign that Rocco did, Plaid for Dad, was far more successful.

We also have the Canadian Centre for Men and Families with us. There are a number of individuals here from that organization. It's a group out of the city of Toronto who are active with male abuse issues: male-on-male abuse, spousal abuse, but also helping with the kinds of issues men face in divorce: separation from kids—those anxieties—giving them a better sense of how they can live more productive lives post-divorce. They're doing great work in the community. I'm delighted that they will be here to join us today.

What I would like to encourage in the House is that we get that same level of unanimous support I saw last night. If we are able to get this bill passed in time for this year, we will be celebrating Men's Health Awareness Week the same week that my tipping bill comes into effect.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to leave the debate, and I hope I get all-party support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise in the Legislature to lend my voice in support of Bill 170, An Act to proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June as Men's Health Awareness Week.

What's clear here is that not one of us in this chamber has managed to escape the impact of a beloved family member or close male friend who has fallen ill with a preventable disease. One of the most tragic responses to preventable disease states is, "If only he had had an examination a year ago, this could have all been prevented."

Mr. Speaker, the health of all Ontarians is important. When a negative diagnosis is given, the impact on a patient and his family is catastrophic. It's truly a family issue. And of course, there's a significant cost to the health care system itself.

The purpose of Men's Health Awareness Week is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and to encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. This week will give health care providers, the media, public policy-makers and individuals the opportunity to encourage men and boys to seek regular medical advice and early treatment for disease and injury.

As a society, we're now doing more to stay healthy for a longer period. More of us than ever are investing in things to keep us healthier: gym memberships, wellness programs, vitamin supplements and appropriate diets. It seems so fitting, at this time, that we also stress the importance of medical examinations that can prevent disease in males.

We have more information than ever before about disease prevention, so let's take that week and turn our minds to male health. At the end of the day, it will help direct all of us to live a better and more balanced life.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: First of all, I'd like to thank the member from Beaches–East York for bringing this important bill, the Men's Health Awareness Week Act, forward today. I would also like to commend the Canadian Men's Health Foundation for their support and advocacy of this bill.

I'm very strongly in favour of this bill on a personal level. My family always competed at high levels of sports, including myself, and exercise has always been an important part of our lives. Fortunately, we've had some longevity because of it. I think the combination of diet, exercise and—unfortunately, I worked in an environment that wasn't too healthy, a steel plant, but thank God I didn't smoke, which might have helped a bit—is very important. Exercise, good health and competition build a really good foundation for building health in men and women as well.

This bill puts Ontario in line with many jurisdictions around the world that have also proclaimed the third week of June as Men's Health Awareness Week. In 1994, Senator Bob Dole, a Republican, and Congressman Bill Richardson, a Democrat, sponsored a successful bill that proclaimed the third week of June as National Men's Health Week. It has been followed by the governments of many US states and by the mayors of several large US cities.

We're all aware that many men are inhibited from looking after their health and well-being to the extent they should. In particular, many men have a reluctance to seek primary care which, among other things, can lead to early diagnosis of medical conditions. Sometimes men don't put a high priority on their own health, and the tragedy of this is that the majority of premature deaths among men are preventable. The Canadian Men's Health Foundation tells us that 70% of men's health problems can be prevented by adopting healthy lifestyles, and that men are 40% more likely to die of cancer and 70% more likely to die of heart disease.

Men are much more likely to die prematurely than women. Men are at greater risk of suicide than women in all age groups. Men tend to have a less healthy lifestyle than women: They're more likely to drink alcohol to excess; they are more likely to smoke; they have poorer diets; and they usually have more accidents.

Most critically, the United Kingdom's National Health Service found that men are 70% more likely to die from cancers that are not specific to males or females—70%, Speaker; that's pretty high. One side of that is the higher incidence of these cancers, again, partly caused by poorer lifestyles, but the other side is that men are far less likely

to undergo screenings and more likely to delay a visit to a doctor to report troubling symptoms. Thus, their cancers are less likely to be diagnosed at an early stage when survival rates are magnitudes higher.

I can't emphasize enough, Speaker: We all—men and women—need to see a doctor at least once a year for a checkup. Even if you don't have a family doctor, which is so important for continuity of care, make an appointment at a clinic if necessary. It's free. There are many gaps and problems in our not-quite-universal health care system, but free access to a doctor for an annual checkup is not one of those. But we desperately need to address the continuing shortage of family doctors in the province, and I hope that the member from Beaches—East York, who sponsored this bill, is advocating just as strongly with his own colleagues in cabinet for expanded access to family physicians.

1410

We know that the health of men and women is profoundly determined by the conditions in which they live their lives. Unless we start to reverse the growing inequality in the province, the health of many lower-income Ontarians is only going to decline further. The government needs to do so much more to tackle inequality and stop the growing gaps in the health of Ontarians. We need universal access to a family doctor, and we need what the NDP has been calling for for decades, which is to ensure that no person in this province goes without their much-needed prescription drugs because of cost. But what has this government just done? It has asked nearly every senior in this province to pay up to 70% more for their prescription drugs. Speaker, what do you think that will do for the quality of seniors' health?

I have spoken many times before about the brutal fact that poverty breeds poor health. I read a very disturbing article in the Hamilton Spectator last week that spelled out in great detail the link between poverty and late-stage cancer diagnoses in Hamilton. In the old city of Hamilton, and particularly in the poorer parts of the lower city, the rate of stage 3 and stage 4 cancer diagnoses is extremely high—many times higher than in the wealthier, more suburban areas. These parts of the old city have low incomes, poor educational outcomes, high rates of poverty and the highest rates of late-stage cancer diagnosis. What does this mean? It means that high poverty is literally killing people in the lower city in Hamilton and in parts of my riding.

For example, when colorectal cancer is diagnosed at stage 1, the five-year survival rate is 93%. If it is not diagnosed until stage 4, the survival rate drops to 10%. People who live in poverty have not had the same access to education that most of us take for granted, and have delayed access to their health care. They often don't have a family doctor, they tend to delay seeing a doctor, they don't necessarily understand some of the symptoms they are experiencing and they are less likely to undergo screening. It's awful; really bad.

Many parts of my own riding and the riding of my colleague from Hamilton Centre suffer from appalling

rates of cancer and late-stage diagnosis. There are thousands of preventable deaths each year in Hamilton and across the province that may not have to happen in a fairer, more equitable society.

To close, my NDP colleagues and I support this bill as an opportunity to raise much-needed awareness about men's health, but it is critical that the government actually takes advantage of this opportunity. And it is equally critical that the government starts to get health care right, to make it a real priority and ensure that everyone in this province has equal access to a family doctor and to the prescription drugs they need.

The Liberal government has spent the last year spinning a bit and talking about what they call "broadening" the ownership of Hydro One. It's about time they stopped the spin and started thinking and talking seriously about broadening access to health care in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, as the minister responsible for health promotion, I'm really pleased to rise and speak to Bill 170, being brought forward by MPP Potts, An Act to proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June as Men's Health Awareness Week.

I also want to recognize my good friend Chris Yaccato, who is here in the members' gallery. Chris was here earlier for the introduction of the amendments we are proposing to Smoke-Free Ontario. I forgot to recognize him then, but thank you for all your support.

As the minister responsible for long-term care, I have visited long-term-care homes across Ontario. One of the things that struck me early on—I'm sure there are a number of us here who have probably noticed this as well—is that in long-term-care homes, where the average age is about 85 years, women outnumber men not just two to one, not just three to one, but I'm going to say five to one or six to one. Where are all the men? There are no surprises when I read that women quite simply outnumber men after a certain age, and that women outlive men by six years globally. So, across the world, women are living longer than men.

In comparison to women, men are 79% more likely to die from heart disease and 40% more likely to die from cancer. I know that the MPP from Hamilton had 70% more likely to die from cancer and I have 40%, but the point is that they're more likely to die of cancer than women are. Men are 57% more likely to die from type 2 diabetes compared to women, and four times more likely to commit suicide.

Interjection.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: There is some good news, though, and the good news is that many of these diseases that men die from prematurely are actually preventable by making small changes.

I know MPP Potts alluded to it, but I think all of us women can agree that the reluctance of men to go and see a doctor is probably only matched by their reluctance to ask for directions when they're lost. I think we can all speak to that. I think we all have men in our lives—fathers, husbands, boyfriends, sons, sons-in-law, colleagues, friends—who are reluctant to even admit they're not feeling well, never mind actually going to see a doctor. So I really applaud this initiative by MPP Potts to have an entire week dedicated to raising awareness of men's health.

I do want to take a minute here to recognize MPP Potts's consistent advocacy on health promotion issues, whether it's fighting obesity—he is very, very passionate about that. He is also very knowledgeable on e-cigarettes, electronic cigarettes. I've had the pleasure of working with him, as the minister responsible for health promotion, very closely on a number of health promotion initiatives, and I can tell you that he is really passionate about this particular topic, so it's no surprise that he is introducing this bill.

I can also say that I think the timing is perfect. In June every year, on the third Sunday of June, we celebrate Father's Day, so to have the week before that designated as Men's Health Awareness Week, I think, is a fabulous idea. I think we can find all-party support on an issue such as this, particularly since the men do still outnumber the women in this Legislature. I think the men ought to be voting for this, in their own self-interest if nothing else, and we women will definitely support you, because women care about the men in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, absolutely, as the minister responsible for health promotion, this bill has my full support, and I certainly hope that members from all sides will support it

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise on behalf of my residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry to talk about this important bill.

I think it does say a lot. The member from Beaches—East York—the timing is maybe a little off, but with Father's Day, it's probably a good idea, just the bill working through. Of course, getting the government to pull up is a bit of a challenge as well.

It speaks loudly to how sometimes we just forget our own health. We heard just a little while ago about farm safety. I look back at my own family, and some of the serious and fatal accidents, actually, on the farm. It all spoke about not looking after yourself.

In my dad's case, I think the stress of being responsible for a large family—if I go back into the early 1960s, there were no farms that were very affluent. Most farmers had more than one job. We had dairy cows. We planted crops. My dad sold seed in the wintertime when it was not planting season. We made maple syrup when it got a little warmer. Of course, when we got into the busy seasons, we worked long hours. We spent most of our time trying to get out of those long hours, being younger, but it was always his job to pull us back and make sure things got done.

That stress plays on you after a while. I think that it might have been prevalent, as farmers, but I guess it was

right across society, especially at that time, when there generally was only the one breadwinner in the family. As they aged, the fact that you might admit that you had a health issue—especially because for most of his life, health care was not free, so there would be the indication that if you went, it was going to cost money. We were lucky enough that I had an uncle that was a doctor, but many families didn't have that. That added to the problems and the stress we have today. Little problems didn't get looked after, and they became big problems.

As you look through, there are so many examples, even in people of my generation, friends I had. I had a classmate in school who collapsed on the ice in Maxville. He had just retired, not a worry in his life, and all of a sudden everything changed for him. Luckily, one of the players on the ice was a volunteer fireman. They were able to use a defibrillator and resuscitate him. He had the necessary medical treatment and he's still around today. But that was a lucky situation, because if he had been anywhere but at the arena, the outcome likely wouldn't have been so successful.

With a defibrillator program that we have in most of our public buildings, it really—just in Glengarry county, I wouldn't even say in my riding, I think I know of three cases where somebody was saved by a defibrillator. Each case was a young man—a parent, most times—who had no idea there was an issue, but it turned out they had a serious heart issue. It just speaks of people not looking after themselves.

I'm glad to see—I saw him today, too—a great champion for this cause and the community in general. We see him in so many areas where he's involved and this is just another sector he is in.

I was looking through the website—Don't Change Anything, I think it was—and I see—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Don't Change Much.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Don't Change Much, thanks; Brendan Shanahan. Being a big Detroit Red Wings fan, I can remember—it may be more memorable to Detroit fans—certainly the Colorado-Detroit fights and the rivalries between the two teams. He was front and centre in that. I remember a couple of series-winning goals and the big fight they had that captured most of the hockey world for about 10 years. At that time, he was fighting for something else, but it's a cause that he sees today as worth fighting. I know people he was acquainted with, Bob Probert being one, somebody who didn't look after his heath. He was taken at a very young age. That's just another example. Jiří was another one from Detroit, the defence man who had a heart attack under the age of 30.

These are things people have. You don't expect it and certainly you don't get tested. In cases where you're under 30 or 40, I guess you can see that. But certainly, I know as you get older, the idea of having a medical where you might check your heart is probably quite rare in society today. People generally go when there's a problem, and when you're talking heart, it's generally a very serious problem.

I know we don't look after ourselves. One of the pages they had on the website was "Sweat is just fat crying." I think it speaks loudly because nobody takes the time to exercise. If I look around this building, I would think that probably most of us enjoy the exercise, enjoy the time, but probably most of us don't take the time, as well. We all know that's not good. We probably hear that every day. If you take the time to do some exercising—actually, I did some this morning, but that was the first time this week, which is not acceptable.

One problem I have is that if you do exercise in the morning, when you get to this building it's so darn hot it takes you so long to cool off. It's an issue. This building seems to be always 10 degrees too warm. You almost attempt not to move in this building because if you do—you know, the perspiration and all the other things go along with that. I know we had an energy bill today but maybe we can spend some of that money on fixing the heating system in this building, maybe put a window in the cafeteria or something downstairs. It just generally is way too hot.

In my own family, my brother-in-law died of skin cancer at a young age, an issue that he became aware of, but he was too busy to look after it and by the time he got in to look after it, of course—it's one of these silent killers. You have a little mark on your skin, and I guess in our family maybe it's a little more—we've had a fair number of people pass away with skin-cancer-type diseases. It should be a wake-up call for us to look at.

In the end, my dad died of colon cancer. Again, it was something that, if you get the testing done today, your chances of not getting cancer are almost 100%. It's the old story about not taking the time or getting advice to get some of these tests done, and of course, it's fatal. I look back at him. He was semi-retired and starting to enjoy his time. We were a little older, so we can look after things around the farm. It was a hard life for them, coming through the Depression and coming through the war. To have something that really is preventable just when things are getting better is the unfortunate part. It goes back to talk about people not looking after themselves.

On a bit of a lighter note, I was at a seniors' building in Chesterville, probably a year and a half ago. I think it was a protest against the physiotherapy cuts. Anyway, we were there, and there was a table where two men were sitting. I went over to talk to them for a few minutes, and one of them made a joke that when they have a dance or something, they are in quite a bit of demand. He said, "When you look around, we're the only two guys in this place." There were 70 or 80 people in the seniors' residence, and there were only two men in the whole building. It just talks about the numbers. Again, it's kind of funny, but when you look at the issue, it's not all that funny.

It's just something that I think a day like today will do a lot to bring attention to, and it's something that's well overdue. We may be talking about men's health, but when it comes to exercise and looking after yourself, I wouldn't think that either sex in this building would be any different. Here, like in many places, we're working seven days a week, and we tend to throw these things to the back and wait until something happens.

I think it's a clear reminder that everybody should be looking after themselves. It ends up being cheaper in the end, so don't think of it as a money issue. If you can take care of something before it's an issue, hopefully, you'll stay out of the operating room or worse.

Anyway, we will be supporting this bill and look forward to its passage.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I'm speaking on this bill? That's funny.

I speak from personal experience that a whole bunch of people may relate to. I grew up at a time—I think a lot of people in this chamber are the same way—when men measured their success by how tough they were: if you were able to cut an extra cord of wood, if you happened to work in the bush, or muck an extra car underground or whatever it was that you did for a living. The generation of my grandfather, my dad and even my generation, to a certain extent, when we were younger measured our success by how strong you were and how much you could take to show how tough a worker you were. Nobody ever really thought about having to take care of themselves, because everything was a measure of having to show just how manly you were and how tough you were.

It wasn't just at work, where a lot of people would measure how much they could do: how many cords of wood and how many mine cars they could fill by hand. Once they finished, they ended up at the bar, and they would show just how tough they were by how many beers they can drink and how much food they could eat. I remember, as a kid growing up, that these men, who were probably a little bit bigger than I was and sort of larger than life, all ended up dying in their fifties or early sixties. Why? Because the lifestyle they led couldn't sustain their life for as long as it needed to.

I think what has happened over the years is that the generations coming up are a little smarter about what they do as far as choices, and how they measure success. Back in the day, we measured our success by the output of our work and our standing within the workplace. It was a different sort of ethic that existed at the time—excuse me, I have a cold; this darn cold has been running around.

I look at the younger generation: My son-in-law Shane runs triathlons and watches what he eats and trains on a spin bike and runs outside. When it's snowing and miserably cold, he will take off for a so-many-kilometre run, a so-many-kilometre swim in the summer, and a so-many-kilometre ride on his bike in order to be able to stay at that level. I remember talking to him at the very beginning when he started doing this. It wasn't to compete; it was just something for himself.

1430

I think what we're starting to learn is that if you don't take care of it, you ain't going to have it forever, so you better learn to take care of your body. It's something that's like saving up for retirement for a lot of people my age. Nobody really saves up for retirement until they're about to retire; and a lot of people don't start thinking about taking care of their health until they get into their fifties or sixties, and it's a little bit too late and you've had a couple of scares.

I'm the guy whose blood pressure went through the roof last September. That's why I was off from this place for two or three weeks. I started checking my blood pressure and it was going nuts, and it took a while to regulate. That was a sign something was going on. So it took a while, and since then I still have a lot of bad habits. I still like my beer every now and then, and I certainly love pasta. You can't get away from pasta; I don't care how hard you try. But you walk more; you watch what you eat. As you were saying earlier—and I appreciate that—you grab a glass of water instead of a glass of wine. I've done silly things. Like, I don't keep any alcohol in my apartment because I don't have to drink it. I'm at the point where I don't do a lot of that at home either. It's choices that we make.

I want to say another thing because it really is important. This Legislature treats its members poorly. The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek sort of heckled it, but there's no shower in this building for members who want to bike into work, who want to jog into work or walk at a brisk walk, to be able to get out of their jogging clothes and go to a place and have a shower and then get dressed up in our monkey suits that we wear when we come to this place. I used to bike to work and I stopped doing it because the only shower in this building—and a lot of people don't know that—is downstairs in the north wing, below the Liberal caucus services. There's a place down there that looks like a dungeon. That is the shower. I wouldn't suggest that women go there because there are no curtains, there are no doors, so there's no privacy. That's the best that we can do for the members of this assembly.

We treat ourselves shabbily because our lifestyle stinks. Really. We don't eat well. We work long hours. We're constantly under stress. We choose to do these jobs but we don't make it easy for members to be able to come to this place and to exercise.

I would just close on this one point in regard to how maybe the House leaders can get together and make this thing pass quickly. I'm a House leader and I'll just say this: Just so people understand, the Liberal caucus will have to decide which bills it wants to move on at the end of the session when it comes to the deal we make with private members' bills. So if the Liberals choose Mr. Potts's bill and say, "This is a bill that we would like as part of the package at the end of the session," I don't think we're going to have an objection on this side of the House, but you have work to do on your side. I'm pretty sure that, in fact, it is supported by your caucus.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to support Men's Health Awareness Week here in Ontario. This bill will proclaim the week preceding the third Sunday in June in each year. I also congratulate the member from Beaches—East York for bringing forth the Men's Health Awareness Week Act, 2016.

Supporting men's awareness week, some of my colleagues have mentioned some of the numbers where men are slow learners in taking care of their own health. But one of the dominant ones that struck me was that men are 79% more prone than women—and likely to die—from heart disease. There is a pretty clear message there.

Supporting men's awareness week is special for all men to care for your loved ones, your spouse, your children and your grandchildren. I've spoken in this House previously on this item, in the days of our retired minister and past MPP George Smitherman, who spoke so eloquently.

Good health means so much to men and is led by good physical conditioning, an example that should be

continued and expanded with this week.

My late father, Lou Dickson, had the introductory line in his eulogy that said, "A world-class athlete has passed away December 10, 2011." I'll do a very brief story. He was part of the Canadian Olympic team in 1936; he sprained his ankle and couldn't go. In 1940, four years later, of course, was World War II, and the Olympics were cancelled. In 1944, four years later again, the Olympics were cancelled. By the time the 1948 Olympics came along, my father was married and already had three children, and that pretty much put an end to that part of his life.

He was an entrepreneur. He walked everywhere, as a business person, because we never had a car. We wouldn't have had a car, except my mother won \$1,100 in the Irish Sweepstakes just before 1960. We had a latemodel 1950s car, so we didn't have to use two taxis to take all of the children to mass every Sunday.

I have to tell you—and I'm going to be very brief—that my father was a special example. He was my mother's partner, and all of her life, particularly for the last two years of her life, he was her personal caregiver.

Dad was not a smoker, drank very rarely, and continued to walk, day in and day out, running his businesses right until the very end. Finally, he died on December 11, with a cyst on his brain. The doctor said to a number of us children who were standing around, "That's something I've never seen. There's a 95-year-old man, who has just died, and he was a man with a body somewhere between the ages of 60 and 65."

He took care of himself, to help our mother and to help care for his 10 children. I want to repeat that: He took care of himself all his life, to help my mother and to help care for all 10 children. I have to ask the question: Why aren't we? Maybe we will, with this annual reminder of Men's Health Awareness Week in Ontario.

Thank you again to our member from Beaches–East York, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to this bill. I want to congratulate the member from Beaches–East York for bringing it forward.

We've heard, as we've gone through some debate this afternoon, about how we don't take care of ourselves. I'm the son of a nurse, so I actually have my own primary care provider at home. But I'll say that between the ages of 35 and 50, I did not visit any practitioner. I have a family doctor now, who I don't visit as often as I should. We all need to be reminded of this.

I want to say a few words about a person in my community, Jean-François Claude, who I've known for a long time. He's involved in politics; he's a public servant. He was honored at the Royal Ottawa Inspiration Awards Gala last week. He suffered from mental illness, which had a profound effect on his family. He has become a champion for men's health and men's mental health.

One of the things that really jumps out at you in the statistics—we can see that cancer is more likely; type 2 diabetes; heart disease—is suicide. Men are four times more likely than women to commit suicide. That's incredible, when you think about it.

As men, we have to overcome this idea that we can do it all on our own, that we don't need help, that we can somehow just continue on and not require the support of the people who can help us, the support of the people who can diagnose what we have and can treat us. What this does is, it has a profound effect on our families and the people close to us.

Again, I commend the member, because it has a broader impact than just on the men who are here. I can't agree more than with the member from Timmins–James Bay. We could do a better job in this Legislature of making sure that not just the members, but the people we work with here, the people who work in this Legislature, have an opportunity to be able to exercise. The sedentary lifestyle is the new cancer. It's the thing that's creating disease in all of us. I have to say that I agree with him.

I do want to say to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, whom I have a great deal of respect for: I do want to assure him that we're doing a lot in primary care and that 94% of the people who want a family doctor have one. There's still a lot more work to do, and we all take that very seriously. I just wanted to express that to him, that that's something that we all share here. There's still a lot of work to do, because people have to know that they need to get a family doctor.

Again, I congratulate the member from Beaches–East York. I fully support this and appreciate the opportunity to speak to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Beaches-East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to all the members who have given comment today: the member from Whitby—Oshawa, the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek,

the Associate Minister of Health, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member for Timmins–James Bay, the member for Ajax–Pickering and my colleague from Ottawa South.

Dr. Turner, who I talked of earlier in my remarks, also spoke of a documentary called The Mask You Live In. It's an American documentary which highlights the kinds of pressure we put male children under: "Don't be a crybaby. Step up. Act like a man." It's that kind of societal pressure early on that puts us in a situation where we think we have to succeed. Because of this notion that men have to be successful and have to look after—when things don't go so well and they become depressed, this leads to this statistic: three or four times more likely to die of suicide.

My friend Patrick Dion, who is Ontario's representative and the vice-chair of the board of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, says that suicide is not just a health issue but a public health issue, and action must be taken to develop preventive strategies to support the general improvement of men's health in Canada.

Also, representatives are here from the lung association: George Habib has written in to tell me that among the specific health challenges facing the men of our province is their persistently high incidence of continuing tobacco use. Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable illness and death in our province, and so the lung association seeks improved access to free smoking cessation programs for all Ontarians.

That's the kind of message that we want to be getting through, through Men's Health Awareness Week. It is significant, the third Sunday being Father's Day, that it is that preceding week.

I do appreciate very much the support I've heard in the House for moving forward with this bill. I look forward to seeing it in committee shortly and seeing if we can't get, at the end of session, all-party approval to move this forward as one of the bills so that we can proclaim that week in June 2016. Ontario will be the leader across Canada in doing so, and joining some states in the US.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ MENTALE MATERNELLE

Mr. Anderson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 176, An Act to proclaim Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day / Projet de loi 176, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation à la santé mentale maternelle.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I want to start by first thanking a few people who have lent their expertise to this bill. I would like to thank Dr. Van Lieshout, who is here today from the Women's Health Concerns Clinic at St. Joseph's hospital in Hamilton. I would also like to thank Dr. Vivian Polak of the Wellington Reproductive Psychiatry Telemedicine Program, as well as Sharon Brooks from Brant. They have all been integral in bringing this issue to our attention, and were extremely helpful in aiding my team to bring this bill to the House in a very timely fashion. I would like to thank their network for bringing this issue to the forefront, and I hope we have their—and their colleagues'—support while we move forward with this bill and with maternal mental health awareness. Thank you all.

Speaker, we all too often take our health for granted until it changes, until we become ill. Changes in our mental health are perhaps the most immediately worrisome and frustrating, because our mental state can shift quickly, sometimes unpredictably, and we can be annoyed by mild anxieties and debilitated by complex psychoses.

But imagine for a second that you're pregnant, carrying your child, or perhaps have recently given birth to your child, and your mental state of being changes. It could be a minor change, like exhaustion or trouble sleeping, or it could be a more significant change, like an obsessive need to check on your child, a deep and sustained feeling of sadness or a confusing loss of a sense of self. Who do you worry for now? Where do you turn? To whom do you feel more responsible, and is there anyone who can help you? The reality is that these types of questions cross the mind of anyone with a mental illness, but they can be especially troubling and have larger implications for a new or expecting mother.

It is common knowledge that almost one in five women who go through pregnancy experience mental illness. Imagine, Mr. Speaker: one in five. That's an astronomical amount of women who go through this illness. Do Ontarians know that 85% of those cases go untreated? Postpartum depression alone affects 15% of women worldwide, and the World Health Organization considers depression to be the most common cause of disability for women in their potential child-bearing years.

That is the context of this bill, which aims to proclaim the first Wednesday in May of every year as Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day.

The importance of this day is to raise the profile of maternal mental illness so that new and expecting mothers know they are not alone if mental illness befalls them, that there are safe treatments and strategies, and that we, as a province, remain aware of the importance of these women to their families and their communities.

Maternal mental illnesses are broadly considered to be mood or anxiety disorders that occur during pregnancy or up to one year after giving birth. This includes depression, anxiety, mania, psychosis, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, co-occurring substance use disorders and more. Left untreated during pregnancy, these can lead to feelings of isolation, premature delivery or fetal growth delay.

Left untreated after birth, maternal mental illness can put children at a higher risk for social and behavioural problems, including anti-social behaviours, ADHD, decreased IQ and language delays. They're also more susceptible to developing an insecure attachment style, which can impair their abilities to form relationships later in life.

Partners of these women are also at an increased risk of depression and anxiety.

In the most severe of cases, these illnesses can lead to suicide and infanticide.

The complexity of this issue was expressed to me this past summer when I had the opportunity to travel throughout our province to collect Ontarians' input and experiences to work towards a fetal alcohol spectrum disorder strategy.

1450

This past fall, I released my report on what we heard at those round tables. Among the things that stuck out to me were claims that FASD is preventable. It seems simple when you think about it: If you don't drink, your child will not have FASD.

But there were voices that challenged that, and I'm very glad that they did. They asked us to consider the women who had no choice but to drink. They ask us to remember that there are mothers who are addicted to substances like drugs and alcohol. They reminded us that there are mothers who feel they have few choices but to cope with their mental illness with alcohol.

Yes, FASD is preventable, but prevention means more than simply not drinking. Among other things, it means that mothers have the resources, tools and supports they need to manage mental illness in a healthy way.

There was another common thread from the FASD round tables that carries over to maternal mental illness that I want to highlight, and that is the presence of stigma. Mental illnesses carry their own stigma in our society as it is, whether it's due to lack of understanding, a fear of some sort or an overemphasis on what it means to be "normal." There's a tendency for mental illness to force individuals to deal with it on their own. Luckily, we're moving towards a culture of mental health maintenance in which we consider our mental well-being to require as much routine maintenance as our physical health.

We should know that women are not simply mothersin-waiting for society to prescribe upon, but we have a tendency to heap the pressure on women as keepers of not only their own health but the health of their children. That is not an easy stress to deal with, and it does not create the sort of environment where a woman feels safe to come out as mentally ill during their pregnancy. This creates a significant barrier to their willingness to seek medical attention and to receive a diagnosis and treatment. Although a significant barrier is a lack of awareness about what treatments are available, many women fear that mental illnesses are predominantly treated with medication, and they worry what sort of impact that will have on their fetus or nursing child. Most women are not aware that treatments include non-medical behavioural changes or that some prescription medications are safe to take during pregnancy. Proclaiming this day will provide organizations an occasion to highlight these options so that women feel more comfortable to come forward with their concerns and illnesses when they most need help.

Our government is moving forward with a mental health and addictions strategy. Since 2003, funding for mental health has increased by over \$506 million, to a total of \$3 billion. Phase 2 of that plan will provide further funding to community partners for service delivery and fill the gaps in our system.

Of course, the ministry's best practices for health care professionals include health promotion initiatives that encourage parenting skills and healthy-development knowledge of newborns and their families, into which mental health promotion and parental self-care promotion are integrated. But knowledge of what constitutes maternal mental illness, how common it is and what can be done to manage it deserves an opportunity to be highlighted so that women feel comfortable coming forward can find the services they need and can ultimately live safe and happy lives.

Speaker, thank you for the time. I look forward to further debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise and speak on Bill 176, the Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day Act. Full disclosure: I have four children. I did not suffer, I would say, mood swings or anxiety. Actually, I felt better when I was pregnant than when I wasn't pregnant, which is probably why I had four children—because my blood pressure, I guess, is normally a little low, and it was probably normal.

But I was hit very hard when my mother passed away about seven years ago. That was the first time in my life where I felt what you would really call clinical depression. You wake up in the morning and you feel like you have weights on your arms and legs, and you have to really push yourself to get out of bed. That lasted for me for about a month or two, and then it just went away. But I have a vast support network and I'm very comfortable telling people how I'm feeling and asking people for advice, and even going and speaking to my doctor and seeing if I should be going for counselling or anything like that

I can't imagine, though, how a woman would feel, giving birth, which—you know what?—can be physically painful, not just the delivery but even after the delivery. It's okay to say some medical terms here, I think, but a lot of women—not myself but a lot of my friends had pretty difficult episiotomies. They had trouble healing. Women have Caesarean sections—a lot

of complications we all know where pieces of the uterus are left inside and horrific infections.

To have to give birth and then not be feeling well afterwards and then, on top of that, feel the way that I felt after my mother passed away—I just can't imagine having the responsibility of caring for an infant who is so in need of comfort. An infant is not just about providing food and changing a diaper. It's about smiles, it's about warmth, it's about cuddling. How difficult that must be not just for the mothers but for the rest of the family members—there are often other children involved—and for the infants. This can hit every culture and anybody from any socio-economic background.

We rely so heavily on women to support families and to support elderly parents. We really need to offer women the support they need because when the women collapse, we all know that the families can't continue and cannot function.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence—and I'm glad he's in the House today because I was really moved by some of the stories about women who lost their child. We're talking about postpartum depression, but that's not just for women who've delivered a healthy child. There are also women who, unfortunately, have given birth to a stillborn child or a child who passes away soon after delivery. Obviously, that's going to create a significant amount of difficulty in terms of the mood for the woman and the family around the woman. We need to offer far more support for women when they give birth to healthy children, but even more for women who have children who have health challenges of all types and maybe don't survive into toddlerhood and beyond.

We need to focus on what our priorities are here in the Legislature. We hear that all the time. Maybe we get tired of hearing it, but I want to repeat it. The priority has to be what we're collecting taxes for. That tax revenue is to go—it's not our money; it's to go to support health care, education and social programs that every Ontarian deserves and needs. Yes, it's important for us to talk about these things, to talk about mental health awareness and talk about supports, but without the funding properly directed and going to front-line care—not just to another administration and another bureaucracy and another special day commemorating, but to actually go and do some good. That's what we need to get done here. That's what we need to focus on.

I want to say that my hat's off to all those in our communities who are out there helping people, and I would advocate that anybody who has free time on their hands to, please, volunteer, be a support. You can even do it from the comfort of your own home. If you know somebody who's given birth or is about to give birth, offer your support. People are very shy to reach out, but they do need a helping hand and just sometimes a friendly phone call.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing all the comments on this bill.

1500

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 176, the Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day Act. I want to both congratulate and thank the member for Durham for bringing this bill forward.

New Democrats certainly support this bill. I know I myself, at the birth of my first child, had that experience. The first night, all the new mothers were called into a room. There was a photographer and we could get pictures of ourselves with our new infant, and I experienced this sudden moment of panic: How could I possibly care for this tiny, fragile infant? I actually fled that room. I could not stay. I went back and I cried. I sobbed, because the physiological changes that were going through my body had a really powerful impact on how I felt.

This just touches the surface of what many women in this province and in this country can experience after they have a pregnancy. Some members in this House may recall that in 2000 there was the story of a 37-year-old family physician who threw herself under the subway with her six-month-old son. She was my family doctor, and that experience, having been so close to somebody who entered into the grip of a terrible, powerful illness that she could not control—she was a family physician as well as a psychotherapist, so she was helping other people work through their own mental health issues, but she was unable to help herself because of this terrible postpartum psychosis.

That postpartum psychosis, those extreme kinds of events, are rare, fortunately, Speaker, but they are a reality. We know that less-severe forms of postpartum depression and anxiety affect about 20% of women in this province.

I applaud the member for bringing this bill forward, for proposing to create a maternal mental health awareness day. Education is one of the first steps,

In the example that I provided of the family physician, there was talk, initially, of laying charges against her. The infant died immediately. She survived about a week or so afterwards. There was talk that if she did recover, charges would be laid against her, which I think really shows a fundamental misunderstanding of postpartum psychosis as a very real illness. She was caught in the throes of something that she could not control, and it would be unreasonable to expect her to be able to.

Education and awareness are critically important but, really, Speaker, they are only the first step. I found a very useful document from Public Health Ontario called Scan of Parental Mental Health Best Practice Documents. Certainly, yes, education regarding mental health in the perinatal period is identified as a best practice guideline, but there are many, many other practices that are recommended as being important to help women deal with parental mental health issues.

This report found that women who received psychosocial or psychological interventions were significantly less likely to develop postpartum depression. What that means is intensive, individualized postpartum home visits provided by public health nurses or midwives. It means

peer-based telephone support systems. It means interpersonal psychotherapy. It means facilitated self-help.

There are recommendations around intensive screening for all women in the antenatal period, and also screening for depression during the postnatal period. It means assessing the interaction between mothers and infants in the immediate postnatal period, with careful observation and documentation.

We need resources to be able to carry out these best practices. We've seen a government that has laid off thousands of nurses across this province. We cannot move forward and address some of these issues if we do not have health care professionals in place to provide the kinds of services and supports that are needed.

In my own community of London, there is an organization called Mother Reach London and Middlesex. This is a coalition of over 20 community members and professionals. It was established in 2003 with a three-year provincial government grant, but since that time, it has had to rely on Trillium funding and attempts to cobble together some resources through fundraising events.

I don't think this is a sustainable way to ensure that these services are going to be available to women in our province. It's not an appropriate way to deliver services to women in our province.

Again, I appreciate this bill coming forward. I view it as the first step in a longer-term strategy to address maternal mental health and really deal with ensuring that the supports and services that women need are there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very pleased to speak to this bill, Bill 176, An Act to proclaim Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day, brought forward by the MPP for Durham. It's my pleasure to speak to it as the minister responsible for women's issues, and I want to talk a bit about some programs we offer at the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The one I want to talk about specifically is the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program.

First, I just want to say that I think it is really important, when we look at the intent of this bill, to raise awareness of the broader mental health issues that affect women during and after pregnancy. We know there's still so much stigma associated with mental illness. I know, from my own experience and from the experiences of some of my friends, that it's extra difficult to deal with that stigma, especially around all the excitement of being pregnant and giving birth. It's such a celebratory time in so many phases of the pregnancy, birth and beyond, but if you are challenged from a mental health point of view, I think the stigma can be just so great.

A lot of women I know had high-risk pregnancies, and I had one, too, so I was part of a support group for mothers who were high-risk. I was carrying twins—I think it was triplets, but I lost one of them. Anyway, I got engaged in this group. I never thought I would give birth to premature infants, but I did. My twins came about six weeks early. It can be so hard when you're trying to be excited about what's before you, especially as a new

mother, and then to deal with the risks of pregnancy and the challenges of giving birth to premature infants, who often go on to have challenges, whether they're physical challenges or other developmental challenges.

If passed, the bill would heighten awareness of the broader mental health issues that affect women, and it would certainly be in line with what many other jurisdictions do. So I congratulate the member for Durham for raising the conversation around this issue.

As the MPP mentioned when he introduced the bill. there are some great programs. I just want to give a shout-out to the one at my ministry, the children and youth services ministry, called Healthy Babies Healthy Children, to support vulnerable women and children from the prenatal period until children reach school age. After a baby is born, all new families are offered the Healthy Babies Healthy Children screening program to determine if they would benefit from further services to support healthy child development. That could include home visiting and referrals to community resources and coordination of other services. It's a great program. I know we are getting stretched with our resources with that, so it's an area that I'm looking at specifically, to make sure we can help all new babies and their families be well supported.

Again, congrats to the member from Durham for bringing this forward.

1510

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a pleasure to speak on this important bill, and I thank the member opposite for bringing it forward

In the extreme, we've all witnessed the terrible, tragic stories that have resulted from postpartum depression in women. Many, unfortunately, suffer in silence, almost invisible to their families and friends.

I'm proud of Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences and the programs they've created and the treatment they give, especially to so many women requiring care. This incredibly valuable facility, located in my riding of Whitby–Oshawa, has an outpatient women's consultation service with an interprofessional health care team providing flexible, individualized treatment to patients.

In 2010, Ontario Shores opened the first clinic in Durham region that provides specialized consultation and treatment to women who suffer from a combination of mental health and women's health issues. These issues include postpartum depression and postpartum psychosis.

As a patient named Dorothy said, "I liked the holistic approach to care with the nurse, social worker and psychiatrist. Everything was explained thoroughly and I was reassured I would be taken care of. If something happened, I had their help and support."

It's challenging, though, Speaker, when a facility of this quality has not had an increase in funding for so many years. Instead, what has occurred is layoffs of 25 staff. In my view, Ontario Shores should be given the financial capability to perform to an even higher level

than it is today. Mental health is just as important as physical health, and governments need to treat it that way.

This legislation, in my view, is just a start. I'm looking forward to further discussion on women's maternal mental health and some of the broad issues associated with it going forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always an honour to stand and speak, particularly so close to International Women's Day, about a women's issue. I thank the member for bringing this bill forward.

It doesn't only take a village to raise a child, as has been said a million times. It takes a country, it takes a province and it takes a city to raise a child. Although this bill is well-meaning, and of course we're going to support it, when you're talking about maternal health, both mental and physical, you're talking within the context of a province that really hasn't spent a lot of time focusing on this.

We didn't see a lot for children in this budget, and a budget is a moral document. For women who are raising children in this province, they are facing the highest child care costs in the country. They are facing a child care crisis, I would say, where only one in 10 children actually has a space in child care.

I can tell you that, as a new mother, one of the social determinants of health is housing, as well. We have over 70,000 people in the GTA waiting 10 to 12 years on affordable housing lists. So picture it: The face of poverty in Toronto is a woman and child's face. The face of poverty in Toronto is a woman, the single head of a family, and her child's face. That is the face of our poverty.

We know that at least one in six children live in poverty, that they go to sleep at night without enough to eat. We know you cannot support a child on what the government pays you if you are on social assistance as a woman. You can't do it without visiting a food bank. That's the simple reality. And you can't get a space for child care so that you can get a job. It catapults, Mr. Speaker.

I remember extremely well having my first child. I didn't have parents to help; they had passed on long ago. My in-laws were in Chicago, a long way away. I was completely unprepared for what I was about to experience: a colicky baby—and if anybody has lived through a colicky baby, you know what I'm talking about—who screamed six to seven hours a day, and I didn't know why, and we couldn't fix it. I can tell you, after a few months of no sleep, a few months of worrying about whatever was wrong with this baby—maybe it was just a growth phase—and even with a partner and even with some supportive friends around, it was incredibly difficult. I can only imagine what that situation would have been like if I had to worry about my rent; if I had to worry on my own, without support around me.

Again, you heard the member from London West talking about the lack of home care after birth. That is so

important, Mr. Speaker. It's so important to have someone else come in and help you out, just with simple things like groceries, washing the dishes, doing the laundry. Those kinds of simple chores, especially if you're a single mother, can make the difference between mental health and not mental health. Those are the social determinants of health.

Of course, we know that if you don't look after women, you don't look after their children either. When we talk about maternal health, we're talking about, ultimately, women's health. We're talking about women's health. Again, poverty plays a role. As I said, the face of poverty in this province is a woman with a child. That is the face of poverty. Whether those across the aisle want to admit it or not, that is the face of the homelessness crisis. It's the face of a woman with a child. Yes, a time of awareness for this is extremely important, but we need to do so much more. What we need to do—that is the "so much more"—has been so obvious.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago I marched in my first International Women's Day march here in Toronto. Guess what we stood up for then? Free universal child care; freedom to choose over your own bodies; freedom from violence; and equal pay. And 50 years later, I spoke at the Mary Spratt Breakfast, along with the member from London West. What did I say? "We're still marching for the same things." How long will it take before we have child care? How long will it take before we have equal pay? How long will it take before we have freedom from violence, and the freedom truly to choose?

It all hits home when a woman is at her most vulnerable, and that can be after birth. First, let's look after the social determinants of health. Let's look after women's health. Let's look after children. Let's attack the poverty issue seriously, not just with lip service, because that ultimately determines the health of both mother and child.

My goodness, yes, another day: Let's acknowledge that. Another day is better than nothing, but 50 years from now, I don't want my granddaughters to be marching over the same core demands of the second wave of feminism that we marched over.

Let's do freedom; let's do equality; let's do maternal health; and then you'll get maternal postpartum health as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge, to add a few comments to the debate.

I'm going to start off by wishing my mother, Barbara Murgatroyd, a happy birthday from yesterday. Speaker, it's her story I want to tell today, because this relates exactly to MPP Anderson's bill today—sorry, the member from Durham.

My mother was one of three children born in the early 1930s to a mum who had had three babies in four years. One day, when my mum was 18 months old, my grandmother, on the third floor of her house, lined the three

children up behind her, dressed very well, put her red shoes on, and jumped out the window, asking the children to follow her. My aunt, who was four at the time, determined that this was not the right thing to do, but she remembers to this day the red shoes going out of the window.

My grandmother didn't commit suicide, like she was attempting to do—because she had left a note. She broke her back and was hospitalized. She never came home. She went from the hospital into a mental institution, where she was kept until she was middle-aged.

My mom's brother and sister were split up. My mother moved to Toronto to live with her grandmother and her aunt. My aunt and uncle, because they were a little older, took a ship and moved to England to be with his parents.

1520

This was a splintered family. My mother certainly had some family support around her. She was supposed to be sent to England at some point, to meet up with her brother and sister, but it never happened, and she was raised without her mom, her dad, her brother and her sister.

My grandmother was not treated very well in the institutions that she was in. They didn't have medications at the time. She was one of the first victims who experienced electroshock therapy. Eventually, she did come out of the hospital and reconnected with my mother, who was working as a nurse at that time and had her own first baby, who was myself.

I tell this story because it affects so many women worldwide, of all cultures, all incomes. We today have the knowledge of what it's like to treat and recognize a maternal mental health illness, and in particular, postpartum depression. My mom's family wasn't alone in that.

I have to say that maternal mental health illnesses affect the whole family. Women can develop perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, depression, anxiety, mania, psychosis, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder. My grandmother, as far as we know, was never fully diagnosed. In the most severe cases, like my grandmother's, maternal mental health illnesses can result in suicide or infanticide.

The good news is, we can treat today, through medication and through other issues. But we are also blessed with trying to break down the stigma, so those women who think they may be experiencing a maternal mental health illness can receive some help.

My mother's family was splintered by a likely undiagnosed, untreated, severe postpartum depression. I've often wondered what she would have been like if she'd grown up in her family with her mom and dad and her brother and sister. The happy news is, she did reconnect with the rest of the family as an adult, and was able to bring them back into the family fold.

I cannot support Bill 176 enough. I want to congratulate the member from Durham for bringing forward this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Something that I want to say at the very outset of this opportunity I have today is that it

certainly made me think back, in my own circumstances, to the kinds of things that, today, would be identifiable, but in past generations, there was just sort of a shrugging of the shoulders, and, you know, "suck it up and move on" and things like that.

The comments made by others, with regard to experiences that they or immediate family members undertook, serve to demonstrate the reality of the purpose of today's debate.

I remember my own mother talking about her experience. I was her first-born. She was alone in a strange city; she knew no one. I was a brand new baby. Her husband, my father, had just left to go overseas. I was sick, and there was nobody there to provide advice or respite or anything like that. She used to tell me that the isolation, and the depression that went with not being in control and not having any answers, meant that she seriously thought about just putting a pillow on me, because she had no way of dealing with it. It was just so insurmountable, as it appeared to her, at that particular time.

I think that probably, if we were to investigate our own families, we'd find more evidence of that kind of problem. I would say my mother was a wonderful mother, but as an adult, I can appreciate the kind of isolation and overwhelming nature of the circumstances she found herself in.

It gets worse. My mother told the story of a woman—that was back a couple of generations ago, long before people talked about postpartum and things like that—who lived on a farm in Sarnia, Ontario. She had had three stillborn children in three years. One day, she just went berserk, according to the story, and started digging them up. There was nobody there to provide any kind of professional help or any kind of support.

I think maybe the most important element that was missing is the strength of other people, whether they have degrees at the end of their name or not. It's the strength that you as an individual require, and that was missing.

Today, when we look at creating an awareness day, I think it's probably overdue. We know that it's something that happens to people, and we know how it make it better. Therefore, we should be looking at this opportunity that is provided to us.

The minister made a comment a few minutes ago about the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program. I was very pleased to be a member of the government that introduced that, and I remember that, when it was introduced, the idea was that every single child would be seen, and in most cases everything would be fine. But that was the point. The point was to make sure that everybody was fine.

If you have a nurse come in and, while looking at the baby, would look at the mother and would be able to determine whether there were supports needed for mother, whether there was education needed for mother and what kind of things they needed—today, we have an opportunity to make a difference.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this bill, and I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Durham for introducing this bill. It's very important that we recognize that education is empowerment. To educate and raise awareness will empower women in such a situation.

Many of my friends over the last few years have had little ones, and I've seen them suffer through postpartum depression and through many other things. The lack of understanding around these things has made it even harder for them to find supports within their families and with their friends.

When it comes to having their first child, it was hard to deal with their own emotions, as well as taking care of a child and learning about how to take care of a newborn child. They go through a very difficult time, and I think that it's so important that no matter what the issue is, we raise awareness. The more that people are aware of the circumstances that new mothers face, the more they will be available to help them and to support them.

My colleague from—I'm not going to be able to remember the riding right now—earlier talked about not having the support of your family. Not everybody has the luxury of having extended families to support you or to have your in-laws or parents there to support you. That's why—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Parkdale-High Park—there we go. Thank you.

When the community is more aware, the more likely that supports will be available within the community. They'll have places where they can reach out.

I am proud to support this bill. I know this legislation will be helpful to many new mothers and to many families.

1530

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank everybody for doing this, especially the member from Durham. Everybody is saying that this is something that needs attention. The member from Durham is trying to do his part.

There isn't one silver bullet in transforming this area to get the attention it deserves; there is no magic solution. I know that our tendency is to try to blame the medical system or blame government or blame whatever. I think we have to see that there is a serious, serious black hole when it comes to women's health, and especially maternal health. There's a huge black hole.

There are 144,000 women who give birth in Ontario every year. How many of them go through postpartum depression? I'll bet you there are tens of thousands—all different degrees. What kind of help do they get? I would say it's marginal, because women are supposed to be strong. They're supposed to be great from the instant they give birth, and then they're supposed to go back to work—these are the moms who give birth to healthy babies.

There are about 40,000 women every year in Ontario who have stillborn babies or second- or third-trimester

miscarriages. They get zero help. They are told, "Go home and try again. No problem, go back to work." They're not even eligible for maternity leave. In some cases, they have to give their maternity leave benefits back if they have a stillbirth.

It's about time that we started to yell and scream about this: 40,000 women who have pregnancy loss, the other ones are successful, and they get very little support from society and the media. We're all to blame for this big black hole when it comes to maternal health. Let's do something about it and start by supporting this good, strong initiative by the member from Durham.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Durham, you have two minutes for a

response.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, the member from Cambridge, the member from Brampton–Springdale, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and minister responsible for women's issues, the member from Thornhill, the member from London West, the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the member from Parkdale–High Park and the member from York–Simcoe.

I want to end it by highlighting a few of the key points for my colleagues. Women are equal contributors to our communities and play a very important role in the health of their families. Too often, maternal mental illness is reduced to postpartum depression. While it is a significant illness, it oversimplifies the mental health challenges that up to 20% of women face during and after pregnancy.

These women deserve more than that, Mr. Speaker. They should feel able to come forward with their struggles and have peace of mind that our system and our communities will be there for them in their time of need.

Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day will provide us with an opportunity to focus on the unique needs of these women at a very important time of their lives; to share research, information and best practices; and to move forward to a standard of safety, inclusion and health for these women and their children. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private member's public business.

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE WORKPLACE LEAVE, ACCOMMODATION AND TRAINING ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ
ET LES MESURES D'ACCOMMODEMENT
POUR LES EMPLOYÉS VICTIMES
DE VIOLENCE FAMILIALE OU SEXUELLE
ET LA FORMATION DANS LE LIEU
DE TRAVAIL

Ms. Sattler moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 177, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of leave and accommodation for victims of domestic or sexual violence and to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act in respect of information and instruction concerning domestic and sexual violence / Projet de loi 177, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi à l'égard du congé et des mesures d'accommodement pour les victimes de violence familiale ou sexuelle et modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail à l'égard des renseignements et directives concernant la violence familiale et sexuelle.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very pleased to bring this bill forward today. Before I do, I want to recognize some of my sisters who are here in the gallery with us today: Yolanda McClean, who is CUPE Ontario second vice-president; Christine Laverty and Laura Thompson, from OPSEU Provincial Women's Committee; and Angela Thompson and Sara Labelle, also from OPSEU. I thank them for their support.

I also want to recognize some of the other organizations that have expressed support for my bill, including the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, Women Abuse Council of Toronto, WomenatthecentrE, the Canadian Labour Congress, Ontario Federation of Labour, ETFO, OECTA, Unifor, the Toronto Medical Officer of Health, the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children, and many more.

Speaker, this bill addresses the gap that exists in the government's current initiatives to deal with sexual violence and domestic violence, through Bill 132, as well as its It's Never Okay action plan. It is an evidence-based bill that is informed by research and the experience of other jurisdictions. It is the missing piece that was highlighted during the hearings of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, during the public input that the social policy committee received on Bill 132, during the Changing Workplaces Review and during the gender wage gap consultations. The bill honours all that was heard throughout all those different consultation processes, and also some of the recommendations of the final report of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment.

Passing this bill will further Ontario's reputation as a leader in addressing sexual violence and domestic violence and, ultimately, through mandatory workplace training, in reducing gender-based violence across the province.

The purpose of this bill is to amend the Employment Standards Act to require employers to provide up to 10 days of paid leave, as well as reasonable unpaid leave, to workers who have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence, or whose children have experienced those forms of violence. The leave can only be taken for specific purposes related to or arising from the violence, and that includes seeking medical attention; going to a victim services organization, a rape crisis centre, a sexual assault centre, a women's shelter or any one of those

myriad community organizations that support survivors; seeing a psychologist or another professional counsellor; relocating, which we know is a very real likelihood for women who are fleeing domestic violence; or meeting with law enforcement officials or participate in legal proceedings.

This is important, because throughout this whole last year of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment and throughout the government's action plan, what we heard repeatedly from the people who spoke to the select committee was that we need to take a survivor-centric approach to dealing with these issues. We need to consider the survivors' perspective when we're looking at the needs of those who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault.

From this perspective, whether the violence was experienced at home, on a date, at work or anywhere in the community, the basic needs of survivors and the supports they need to help them heal are the same: health services from a nurse, a physician or a psychologist, counselling from a rape crisis centre or a women's shelter and, as I said, moving to a new residence, potentially a women's shelter or some other kind of second-stage housing.

Of course, if survivors decide to report the violence—and as we know, that only represents about 10% of survivors—there are meetings with the police, there are meetings with lawyers and there's the time that has to be spent preparing for a court trial if the case goes to court, then testifying on the witness stand. Recognizing that survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence should not have to jeopardize their employment because of the harm they experienced, this bill puts in place protections to enable women to deal with the violence and to seek the support that they need without risking their job.

We know that a number of US states have already passed legislation to provide unpaid leave for domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, and those include California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Maine and Oregon, and New York City, Philadelphia and Washington.

1540

But it's also true that many survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence can't afford to take unpaid leave, and that applies particularly to people who are most vulnerable and also are more likely to be victims of sexual violence or domestic violence, such as racialized women, women with disabilities, LGBTQ individuals and others.

The District of Columbia provides paid domestic violence and sexual assault leave of three to seven days, and in November 2015, Manitoba became the first Canadian province to provide paid leave for domestic violence—NDP government, by the way.

I expect that some of the members to my right may raise concerns about what this is going to mean for employers. Isn't paid leave going to be too onerous for employers to manage? Will it open the floodgates for workers to claim, unjustifiably, a leave of absence? Well, with regard to the second point, the bill does include a

provision to allow employers to request reasonable evidence that the leave is for one of the purposes that is specified in the bill. This can be done either through future regulation or through adjudication by the Ministry of Labour. Certainly, throughout that process, we'll want to ensure that the evidence does not impose too high of a bar that it ends up preventing workers from accessing the leave

We know from other jurisdictions—in Australia, there are paid leave provisions across, probably, a third of the workplaces. A 2014 study found that employees who access the leave requested just one to three days of paid leave.

Australia is really leading the way on issues of domestic violence in the workplace. There was a report in November 2015 called Male Champions of Change, which is an initiative involving 30 CEOs and high-profile leaders in business and the public sector. They recognized that paid leave, in addition to other leave entitlements, is critical to help employees experiencing violence to maintain their employment and to ensure their financial security. That report recognized 10 days of paid leave as a developing norm across that country. One of the CEOs who is involved in the initiative said that his firm has 32,000 employees and only 22 had accessed the paid domestic leave over the last six months, with an average leave of 2.3 days.

This leave will not cause financial hardship for employers, but the reality is that employers will have to pay now or they'll have to pay later, because there are significant financial costs to employers associated with domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace. There are costs associated with reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, decreased employee morale and the cost of replacing, recruiting and training new employees as victims resign because they can't manage the violence that they've experienced with their job or they may be dismissed for performance reasons.

There was recently a Canadian study that looked at domestic violence in the workplace. It was conducted by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children. This was a national survey of more than 8,400 respondents. Half of them were from Ontario. A third of the respondents said that they had experienced domestic violence. Another third said they believed that they had a co-worker who has experienced domestic violence. Not surprisingly, four out of five of the victims—the survivors—said that the violence had affected their job performance. Less expected, perhaps: 30% of the co-workers who were aware of somebody else experiencing violence also felt stressed in their workplace. The effects of domestic violence in the workplace are pervasive. They affect not only the employee who's experiencing the violence, but also those around

Finally, I want to touch on another very important provision of my bill and that is the requirement for mandatory workplace training on domestic violence and sexual violence. The survey that I just referred to asked respondents, "Do you get information about domestic

violence in the workplace?" Less than a third of the workplaces said that they were receiving information in their workplace, even though we have Bill 168. We have legislation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act that requires workplaces just to provide that information. Employers are not fulfilling their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, so we need to make mandatory requirements for this information to be provided.

But more than information, we need training. We know that people who are experiencing domestic violence in the workplace are quite likely to disclose to a coworker: 43% disclose their violence to somebody they're working with. Co-workers don't feel equipped to be able to know how to deal with a disclosure of domestic violence, so information and, more importantly, training in the workplace are critical.

There is an excellent information and training package that was funded several years ago by the Ontario government, and I do give them credit for it. It is Make It Our Business, a very rich and robust information and training package available to all employers across this province on a voluntary basis.

The select committee received a presentation about this Make It Our Business training package. When we asked how many employers are participating, how many are taking up this excellent training package, we learned that it's about 1%. About 1% of Ontario employers are bringing this kind of training into the workplace, to engage their workers in recognizing the signs of domestic violence and also in knowing what to do if a co-worker discloses.

I ask all MPPs to do the right thing. Let's solidify Ontario's status as a leader on sexual violence and domestic violence, and vote to pass my bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I want to congratulate the member from London West on bringing this important issue in front of the Legislature today. I have had the privilege of working with her on the select committee and as the women's critic, so we have had a number of opportunities. I know how passionate she is about ending sexual violence and harassment in Ontario.

Our government believes that ending sexual violence and harassment in Ontario is a priority for us, and we've been focusing on this priority, as we passed Bill 132 earlier this week and were able to get royal assent that day. So we see why she's passionate about this; I see why she's passionate about this.

When we travelled the province, we met so many individuals, so many survivors of sexual violence and harassment, that we want to continue to support. We want to support them when they're in this vulnerable position, and we want to be able to help them.

We understand and recognize the severity of this issue and the impact it will have on individuals in their workplaces and in their homes. We want to thank you again, MPP Sattler, for bringing forward your PMB.

We have been concerned about violence, including domestic violence, for some time now. That's why, in

2009, we passed Bill 168, which updated the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Under the OHSA, employers must take every precaution reasonable to protect their workers from possible violence. Workplaces in Ontario are also required to have workplace violence policies, programs, measures and procedures in place to protect workers from violence in the workplace, including domestic violence that may enter the workplace.

We will be supporting this bill. We understand the importance of it, and we will be supporting this bill today. But we want to acknowledge that workplaces in Ontario have certain measures in place. Yes, this will

strengthen those measures, as will Bill 132.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act is the only legislation of its kind in Canada to require employers to take every precaution reasonable, in the circumstances, to protect a worker from domestic violence that may occur in the workplace. An employer must respond when they become aware of domestic violence that may expose a worker to physical injury in the workplace. We made this information on domestic violence available to assist people in workplaces and to assist workplaces in dealing with these situations.

With the passing of Bill 132, our commitment to the safety of workers has increased by ensuring that employers are doing all that they can for men and women who work for them, each and every day.

Our government believes that all women in Ontario should feel safe in their communities, their homes and their workplaces. We have launched a groundbreaking action plan, It's Never Okay, that is investing \$41 million over the next three years. We've implemented many initiatives to raise awareness of domestic violence and to strengthen supports for victims since 2004.

1550

This includes the following initiatives under our Domestic Violence Action Plan:

—the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, training more than 34,000 front-line professionals and service providers to recognize the signs of domestic violence and learn how to support victims effectively;

—the Employment Training for Abused/At-Risk Women Program, which provides women with specialized supports and services to help increase their employability and income-earning potential; since 2006, more than 3,200 women have participated in this program, and 77% of graduates have found jobs or pursued additional training within six months of graduation; and

—the Language Interpreter Services Program, which will help many of our diverse ridings, like my own and which helps victims of violence, including human trafficking, who face language barriers or who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to access services. In 2014-15, over 10,000 victims accessed interpreter services through 790 agencies, and more than 44,900 hours of interpreter services were provided.

We understand and we know that we have more work to do, and we're committed to doing that work. As the member is well aware, we heard from a number of labour stakeholders during the select committee. During our travels with Bill 132, we were able to travel the province and take in consultations which helped make decisions on any amendments we made to Bill 132 through clause-by-clause. We're going to continue to work and further our action plan, It's Never Okay, to support everybody in our community, whether it be in their workplace or their home, on campuses and in schools.

Thank you again for bringing this PMB forward, and we look forward to supporting it today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak on behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills in response to the member for London West's Bill 177, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act, 2016.

I'm also privileged to serve as the official opposition critic for the Minister of Labour, and it is in that capacity as well that I'm speaking this afternoon. I want to commend the member for London West for bringing forward this bill. She gave a great speech this afternoon, and I know that her comments were meant sincerely. It's important to note that this bill would amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, and also the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Just to quickly reiterate what the bill is all about, the Employment Standards Act would be amended and an employee would be able to take a leave of absence if they had experienced domestic or sexual violence. They would also be in a position to take a leave of absence if their child had experienced domestic or sexual violence. They would have to use the leave for certain purposes, such as seeing a doctor, going to victim services organizations or meeting with a lawyer. The leave would last for a reasonable time or for a time provided by regulations made under the act, and workers would be entitled to be paid for up to 10 days of leave in each calendar year. They'd also be entitled to reasonable accommodation with respect to their work hours and their needs in the workplace.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, as I said earlier, would also be amended if this bill were to pass. The employer would have to ensure that every manager, supervisor and worker receives information and instruction about domestic and sexual violence in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I recall my first election in 1990 and some of the issues that were brought up at the all-candidates' meetings. It seems that, through the years, some of those memories from the first election are especially vivid and poignant. This was an issue that came up time and time again in that first election: the need to do more to support victims of family violence. I know that that was an issue that I brought into this Legislature in terms of my thinking right off the bat. Sadly, 25 years have passed and we're still talking about the need to do more to support the victims of family violence.

As I said, I think this bill is well intentioned and well meaning. It reminds us that all victims of domestic and sexual violence need our support—not only the support of government but the support of our society as a whole.

This bill would give employees who are victims of domestic or sexual violence up to 10 days of paid leave, as well as a reasonable time period of unpaid leave, if need be, from work. We think that this bill should be sent to a standing committee of the Legislature for further discussion and public hearings so that more discussion can take place and interested parties can come forward and tell their stories.

I know that because we're in this long session that's almost two years old there are a lot of bills at standing committees right now. There's quite a backlog, I think, in private members' bills at all of the standing committees, but it would be my hope that this bill would have the opportunity to receive public hearings, obviously.

The member for London West noted that there are many other jurisdictions reviewing this issue, and some are currently providing unpaid leave for employees. I understand that this past November the province of Manitoba became the first province to introduce legislation to provide paid leave for victims of domestic violence. When we check the website for the province of Manitoba and their Legislature, it appears that the bill very recently passed third reading but has yet to receive royal assent or be proclaimed to come into force. I guess that will follow in due course, if we read the website correctly.

We believe that employers need to be consulted on this issue because this bill, if passed, would certainly—there's no question—add to their payroll costs. We would ask the question if it's fair to ask employers to foot the entire cost, and we would ask, as well, why isn't the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board doing more to be supportive of victims of domestic and sexual violence?

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we support this bill in principle. We agree that more must be done to support the victims of domestic and sexual violence, and that there is a need for employers to support their employees if they are victims. We would want to see this bill sent to committee for further discussion and ensure that all parties who have an interest in this bill would have a chance to have their say.

We have two other members of our caucus who want to speak to this issue so I'm going to have to stop now, but I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for listening to my remarks on Bill 177. I look forward to continued debate, and again want to congratulate the member from London West for bringing it forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure for me to stand up and support this piece of legislation. I'm incredibly proud of the work that the member from London West has done on these issues around domestic violence. She rightly points out that this is a missing piece of Bill 132, and so this is an opportunity to fill that gap.

When I was going through her validators for the legislation, one that stuck out most for me was the medical officer of health for the city of Toronto, Dr. David McKeown. He rightly points out why this is so important for the workplace. They point out the damaging effects of domestic and sexual violence in the workplace as needing a comprehensive public health approach because, as the member pointed out, these workplaces become poisoned when violence invades them. It is a serious public health concern, as rightly pointed out.

The letter of support is completely well-researched and documented, but what stuck out most for me, Mr. Speaker, is that Dr. McKeown says that this is how perpetrators of violence interfere with the workplace and an employee. This is really an extension of the power that a perpetrator has over a victim. They move it outside of the home into the workplace. Sometimes they prevent employees from getting to work. They repeatedly phone or email. They come to the workplace; they ask questions of the co-workers. They are dishonest with co-workers about the victim's whereabouts, they threaten co-workers and they verbally abuse or physically harm the victims. They also stalk these women in these workplaces. We have evidence of this and we have tragedies to prove it. Essentially, we are still at a place in our history where we have to accommodate this violent behaviour in order to keep women safe.

I think that we can all agree that we still have a huge amount of work to complete on this file, but certainly this piece of legislation is one more tool that can actually try to keep women safe outside of their home, and is an extension of their workplace so that they are not revictimized when they get to work.

I commend the member for bringing this piece of legislation forward. I hope that everyone in this House will support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to stand in this House on behalf of my constituents in Burlington and speak to issues like this. It's such an important issue, Bill 177.

I'd like to thank the member from London West for her passion and her advocacy and, in particular, for initiating this important conversation in the House today. This is a bill that seeks to address an issue that is close to our hearts as legislators, and it's an issue that is sometimes difficult to talk about but one that we must confront. 1600

Ending sexual violence and harassment, ending violence against women, ending violence, period, is a priority for our government, one that I know the member opposite shares. We understand the tremendous and devastating impact that violence and harassment can have on individuals and their families and friends. That is why I'd like to tell the member opposite that our government and I support this bill, as the member from Brampton—Springdale already noted.

Back in the fall of 2014, when the Premier announced that she would form an all-party committee of the Legislature to examine sexual assault and sexual violence and harassment, including sexual violence in the work-

place, I was honoured to be asked to be part of that committee. I'm pleased to say that the member for London West was a part of that committee as well. I enjoyed the work we did together, culminating in the report that we tabled in this House in December. The witnesses that we heard from shared deeply personal stories with grace, dignity and courage, and we received hundreds of useful and very compelling recommendations from across the province. The response we had to the work of the committee gave me an indication of just how pervasive this issue really is. In fact, we had to add additional public hearings to accommodate the demand to testify, as the member will recall. Much of what we heard was heartbreaking but, sadly, not surprising and not completely unexpected.

I started my career 30 years ago as an assistant on Parliament Hill. In fact, as the member from London West knows because she was there, too—we both were there together at the same time, as I learned later—sexual harassment was an issue then as it is now.

I later had the privilege of working at the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women where, in 1992, I had the privilege of working, with a tremendous team of women from across the country, on the national conversation on the rape-shield law. Speaker, when we brought those groups of women together and worked with organizations like the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund and the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, we really thought that, in passing the rape-shield law, we had come a long way. We talked about the education of judges. We talked about the importance of the issue as a society, much as we're doing here today. There were some very high-profile incidents in public discourse, and we really thought we had done a tremendous service, and indeed we had.

But as it turns out, unfortunately, sexual violence and harassment continues to be far too pervasive in our society. That is why we recently passed Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, and launched an action plan, It's Never Okay, investing over \$41 million over the next three years in programs and initiatives to address sexual violence and harassment.

Since 2004, initiatives such as our government's Domestic Violence Action Plan have taken a multifaceted approach, involving many initiatives, including the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, and the training of over 34,000 front-line professionals to enhance their ability to recognize the signs of domestic violence and help to give victims the help and supports that they need. The Domestic Violence Action Plan also includes the Employment Training for Abused/At-Risk Women program, which provides women with specialized supports and services to help increase their employability and income-earning potential.

Speaker, these are just a few examples of what is contained in our action plan, but on its own, it isn't enough. We know that we have more work to do.

In 2009, our government passed Bill 168, which updated the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Under the OHSA, employers must take all reasonable precau-

tions to protect their employees from possible violence. Workplaces are now required to have violence policies, programs, measures and procedures to protect their employees from violence, including domestic violence. The OHSA is the only legislation of its kind in Canada to require employers to take precautions in any circumstance where domestic violence may occur in the workplace. The unfortunate truth is that, despite all of these safeguards, there are still incidents of violence in the workplace, which can take an incredible toll on survivors and their families. In addition to the trauma that can last a lifetime, there can be legal matters that need attention, interactions with law enforcement and appointments with support and care providers. The member for London West also referenced many of these in her very passionate remarks.

Knowing that you can take the time off that you need from work to deal with this incredibly difficult range of issues, without fear of reprimand and retribution, can go a long way in easing the burden faced by victims of violence, particularly given everything on their plate that they are trying to cope with.

In closing, I'd like to thank the member from London West for bringing forward this legislation and for initiating this conversation. As always, she is passionate in her delivery, purposeful in her intent, and well researched, Speaker. She was always someone at committee that we could count on to be very deliberate and really empathetic in her recommendations, and she was indeed that today.

This legislation is an important topic. It's an important conversation for us to have, because it helps to address an issue of tremendous importance to women and their families.

I support this bill, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage all of my colleagues in this House to do the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I am pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 177, the Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Leave, Accommodation and Training Act. We have heard a lot of great input and a lot of great comments, but I think that there's a lot more that needs to be done in terms of just educating the public.

But first, I just want to recap a little bit. This private member's bill, put forward by one of our colleagues here, is basically to give leave, so that an employer would have to provide paid leave of up to 10 days to any employee who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, not necessarily in the workplace—obviously, domestic violence is at home. But we are also very concerned here about the children, and I'm very glad that they added to this private member's bill the fact that the employee would have leave if their child was the victim of any kind of domestic violence or sexual violence.

I'm reminded of somebody named Julie—it's Julie S. Lalonde, if you want to look for her on Twitter. She told an incredible story—I believe she was published in Maclean's—about being harassed by an ex-boyfriend for 11 years, until she got a phone call that he was dead. I

don't recall if she ever said if he killed himself or was killed somehow, but he was a young man, and I don't think he died necessarily of natural causes.

She recounts the absolute horror. What bothers me the most about the whole story is that she hid it from many of her co-workers and neighbours as much as she could. That's the part that really breaks my heart. It takes a village to raise a child. We all agree that communities come together and help with children. But communities need to come together and help adults as well, men as well as women. It's very hard for people to help if the person themselves isn't able to ask for help or isn't able to share their story.

There's too much stigma against people who are victims of stalking, of domestic violence, of sexual harassment, of sexual violence. We have to teach kids from an early age. We don't want to scare kids. We want to empower them to understand that there are people who we may initially love, and we may think they love us, but unfortunately, they don't have our best interests at heart—and how to go about it: who to tell, who to ask, how to make yourself safe, and how to use the resources that are available.

Yes, we are legislators, and, yes, we can maybe add this bill as the missing piece of Bill 132. Maybe we can legislate that employees can get time off. But what we really want to do is help these women, and we want to ensure that it doesn't escalate to the point that they need the time off. We want to help them so that they can be safe, so they can have the quality of life that they deserve and so that their children should have a chance at a promising future.

Let's look at all the different pieces of this puzzle. Let's put our heads together—there is support from all three parties—and let's move forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to congratulate the member from London West for bringing forward these important amendments to the ESA and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

But I want to spend my three minutes remembering Theresa Vince, from Chatham, who was murdered by her boss after years of sexual harassment; and Lori Dupont, a registered nurse who was murdered by a physician with whom she had a relationship that she broke off.

1610

I want to talk a bit about Bill 132. Although it passed, in fact, it doesn't have everything encompassing that we actually need to address sexual harassment and sexual violence in the workplace. Frankly, it basically took 15 or 16 years after Lori Dupont's death to bring forward a bill that was somewhat comprehensive to address the issues.

I remember acutely the fight between the Ontario Nurses' Association and the Ministry of Labour about investigating Lori Dupont's death. Bill 168 was a minimal attempt at putting some changes into the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but they were minimal. Then it took another seven or eight years after that for the government to bring forward some significant amend-

ments that would require employers to do something about it.

The last piece that I really want to talk about is that during the PTSD hearings, the member from Kitchener—Waterloo talked about poisoned work environments, the response from the medical officer of health in Toronto and about how workplaces get poisoned when you have these kinds of activities happening. When I was subbing in for the member from Parkdale—High Park the other day on that bill, the Ontario Nurses' Association's Erna Bujna was making a presentation. She talked about the nurse who was present during the death of Lori Dupont in Windsor, who has never returned to work and has suffered PTSD since that day.

When we hear people talking about the cost to employers, I think that the actual cost for a week or two of leave to employers in workplaces across the province will be far less than having people never be able to return to work and the cost of those benefits through workers' compensation. I think that there is a balance here in actually doing something and providing some leave.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to have a few moments in which to respond to the private member's bill from the member for London West. I think we're starting to see some themes develop here, particularly the process of the private member's bill.

I have two things that I want to particularly highlight in today's discussion. The first one is the issue that someone raised about the 10 days of paid sick leave and the potential resistance that people might have to that. I think that it is more important to talk about the benefits of the time spent with those 10 days and what can be accomplished. If you want to look at it from that line of thinking only, obviously, someone who is able to gain benefits through the question of support in the broader community as well as the professional community is that much better off and a quicker way to be able to maintain their normal life. Obviously, having a job is part of that normalcy. So I think that the 10 days of paid sick leave should be looked at as an investment and a recognition that there is a responsibility by an employer and there is the benefit to the victim.

The other thing that I think is important to suggest about this bill is that it should be sent to public hearings. The more opportunities that the author of this bill has to find places to broaden the public discussion, the better. The whole need for having this is because people have difficulty seeking help or being able to find it in many cases. So anything that helps promote and open up the conversation on this issue is time well spent. I think that would be a huge opportunity to broaden the base of support for this bill. I think that's the most important thing that we can send as a message to the chamber as a whole, to the Legislature as a whole—to be able to demonstrate that we've opened up more opportunities for people to understand the importance of responding to this process.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is an important piece of legislation. Of course, I support it fully. The last thing a woman needs when she finally makes the decision to do something about her situation, and it's a situation of domestic violence, is to lose her job. That's really what we're asking here. We're asking that she not have to make that choice.

The one piece I would say is that enforcement is critical. You've heard that 1% of employers are really complying with protocol as it now stands. Unless there is enforcement of a law, we know that law will be broken. Only 1% of employers ever get a visit from somebody from the Ministry of Labour. That has to change. That's the larger picture.

I have to say that right now, it's a pretty sad scene for women experiencing violence. We've had a couple of very high-profile court cases where clearly women are under threat. Certainly, the Supreme Court has ruled very clearly that if you hit someone, i.e. in domestic violence, it doesn't matter whether you go back, it doesn't matter whether you say you love them, it doesn't matter whether you keep living with them, it's still assault. It's assault, and yet somehow we see this played out in the court system: "No, no, no. She asked for it," or "No, no, no. She kept going back." We've also seen a high-profile Twitter court case where, again, it's open season on women now in social media, because it's okay to be verbally abusive to a woman on social media. That's seen as "freedom" instead of hate speech, which is what it is. This is a violent atmosphere in which women have to live and work.

This bill gives a woman simply one thing, and that's time—simply some time to get some help; to get another place to live, which takes time; to get her children settled, if there are children involved, which takes time; changing schools takes time. All of that takes time. It's the least we can do. It's the very least we can do.

Again, you heard there are jurisdictional examples. There are places that do it much better. So we don't have to invent anything. We just have to put into place the supports that other jurisdictions already have for women and make sure that those supports are supported and make sure that they are enforced.

I want to say, again, kudos to the member from London West. She has been a phenomenal advocate on this file, where women are concerned. Her voice is well known and it's well heard. Those two things are very important in politics. So we thank her again for this.

We call upon the House not just to pass it, but to make sure it gets to committee, to make sure it becomes law, because this will have an immediate effect on women's lives. We cannot just give lip service to something this critical. We have to make it so.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill brought forward by my colleague from London West. I want to say, Speaker, I had the opportun-

ity to chair the social policy committee when we were talking about Bill 132. As other members of the House have said, my colleague from London West followed this matter very closely, came to committee with very detailed recommendations and amendments. I have to say I understand that many of those—most of those—were unsuccessful.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: All.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: All were unsuccessful.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's not good.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, it is not a good thing.

Speaker, this is an issue that is not going to go away. This is an issue that has multiple dimensions. My colleague from London West has focused in on this potential, this need for women to have time off work so they can deal with the immediate crisis, they can go to the medical appointments, go to lawyers, look for housing—all of those things that you have to do if you're going to escape from this very dangerous situation.

In my riding I have a YWCA building for women who have left violent domestic situations. Nellie's is in my riding. The Red Door shelter, which provides family shelter, also provides a place for women who have fled domestic violence. So I have a few facilities in my riding.

I have to say to you, Speaker, I think that as we come to grips with this issue, this piece is one that should not simply be passed here in this chamber this afternoon. My colleague from Parkdale–High Park is entirely correct: It should go forward to committee. It should come back for third reading. It should be adopted and, frankly, we need to go much further down the road.

All my colleagues here, all my colleagues on that side of the House, know that women can flee domestic violence. With passage of this bill they would have greater assistance, greater flexibility than they have now. But in the end, if they can't find a new place to live, oh, so often they are forced back to that place of danger where, in the end, women and children are killed.

The passage of this bill is very useful, very necessary, but steps beyond this have to be taken. We have to invest in affordable housing. There has to be the opportunity for women and the children that they often—mostly—bring with them to be able to settle in secure, affordable, safe housing.

This and a number of other measures are needed to actually end this particular illness in our society, this undermining of social fabric. I'm very pleased that my colleague brought this forward, and I'm very pleased that she fought on committee to try and strengthen Bill 132. My hope is that this House will take this bill, pass it, move beyond it and do a full range of things necessary to deal with the issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am thrilled by the support that this bill has garnered from MPPs on all sides of this House. I wanted to highlight a couple of the comments in particular that were made.

The member from Burlington talked about this bill initiating the conversation. I want to say that this bill really reflects what we heard throughout the whole consultation that went on over the last year. This was brought to us over and over again: in the sexual violence and harassment select committee, in the hearings on Bill 132. It has been raised in the Changing Workplaces Review and it has been raised in the gender wage gap discussion. So this is not initiating the conversation; this is honouring what we are hearing from people who are on the front lines.

I also wanted to recognize and thank the member for Welland for, of course, reminding us that it was Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont and those horrific murders that brought us Bill 168. It was the flaws in Bill 168 that led to Bill 132.

In fact, one of the provisions of this bill, for mandatory training, was an amendment that I had proposed for Bill 132 but was voted down by the government. I'm glad to see that you've recognized the errors of your ways and are going to be supporting this bill. As my colleague said, we want more than referral to a committee. We want it brought back to third reading and passed.

Finally, I want to close on the comments from the member for Kitchener-Waterloo and the member for Toronto Danforth, talking about a comprehensive approach. Yes, we need housing. We need child care. We need partner assault response programs to change the violent behaviours of people who abuse. Until we can change the violence, until we can interrupt that cycle, we are not going to be able to create an Ontario that is violence-free.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MEN'S HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ DES HOMMES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item 21, standing in the name of Mr. Potts.

Mr. Potts has moved second reading of Bill 170, An Act to proclaim the week immediately preceding the third Sunday in June as Men's Health Awareness Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member for Beaches–East York?

Mr. Arthur Potts: To the justice committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be sent to the justice committee. Agreed? Agreed.

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION À LA SANTÉ MENTALE MATERNELLE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Anderson has moved second reading of Bill 176, An Act to Proclaim Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member for Durham?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Social policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to social policy. Agreed? Agreed.

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE WORKPLACE LEAVE, ACCOMMODATION AND TRAINING ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE CONGÉ ET LES MESURES D'ACCOMMODEMENT POUR LES EMPLOYÉS VICTIMES DE VIOLENCE FAMILIALE OU SEXUELLE ET LA FORMATION DANS LE LIEU DE TRAVAIL

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Sattler has moved second reading of Bill 177, An Act to

amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of leave and accommodation for victims of domestic or sexual violence and to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act in respect of information and instruction concerning domestic and sexual violence.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member for London West?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Justice policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Premier has moved adjournment of the House. I want to wish all of you a good constituency week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry? All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

Interjection: Nay.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): He can stay.

Laughter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until March 21, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1628.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-	
	Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London-Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket-Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	-
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Deader, Official Opposition / Cher de l'opposition officient
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest- Nepean	- Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds -Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
		Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism
		Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	1
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax-Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity-Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
,		

Member and Party /	Constituency /	Other responsibilities /
Député(e) et parti	Circonscription	Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Emie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor-Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak RidgesMarkham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering ·Scarborough East / Pickering-Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga -Brampton South / Mississauga-Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton Kent-Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa-Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la
		Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	Obtainment House Beader / Beader pariomentane da gouvernement
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	<u> </u>
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches-East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto-Danforth	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre
		Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
The state of the s		<u> </u>

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor

Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo Han Dong, Michael Harris Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith

Monique Taylor

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn

Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson

Mike Colle, Grant Crack Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon

Lisa M. Thompson

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins

Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon John Fraser, Wayne Gates

Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi

Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri

Laurie Scott

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon

Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod

Han Dong, John Fraser

Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi Julia Munro. Arthur Potts

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat

Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker

Jeff Yurek

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh

Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns

Glenn Thibeault

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch



Continued from back cover	Fashion History Museum
Legislative pages	Mrs. Kathryn McGarry8042
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)8038	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levae)	INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
	DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI
DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS	
Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act (Budget Measures), 2016, Bill 173, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2016 favorisant la création d'emplois pour aujourd'hui	Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, 2016, Bill 178, Ms. Damerla / Loi de 2016 modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée, projet de loi 178, Mme Damerla
et demain (mesures budgétaires), projet de loi 173,	First reading agreed to8042
M. Sousa	Hon. Dipika Damerla8043
Second reading agreed to	
Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016, Bill 172, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone, projet de loi 172, M. Murray	STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES
Second reading agreed to	Canadian Agricultural Safety Week
Notice of dissatisfaction	Hon. Jeff Leal8043
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)8039	Mr. Toby Barrett8043
The Speaker (Holl. Dave Levae)	Mr. John Vanthof8044
INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS	PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS
Ms. Soo Wong8039	Health care funding
Mrs. Julia Munro8039	Mr. Norm Miller8045
Mr. Percy Hatfield8039	Dog ownership
Mr. Arthur Potts8039	Ms. Cheri DiNovo8045
Mrs. Julia Munro8040	Public transit
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry8040	Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde8045
	Health care funding
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /	Mr. Lorne Coe8045
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS	Mental health and addiction services
	Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong8045
DANI	Lung health
Mrs. Gila Martow8040	Ms. Soo Wong8046
Poverty	Health care
Mr. Percy Hatfield8040	Mrs. Gila Martow8046
Sheila Ward	Ontario Northland Transportation Commission
Ms. Soo Wong8040	Mr. John Vanthof8046
Leo McArthur	Lung health
Mr. Bill Walker8041	Mrs. Kathryn McGarry8046
Pay equity	Hydro rates
Ms. Catherine Fife8041	Mr. Jim McDonell8047
Hazel McCallion	Health care funding
Mrs. Amrit Mangat8041	Ms. Peggy Sattler8047
Hospital funding	Elder abuse
Mrs. Julia Munro8041	Ms. Ann Hoggarth8047
Mining industry convention	Health care funding
Ms. Sophie Kiwala8042	Mrs. Julia Munro8047

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS / AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Men's Health Awareness Week Act, 2016, Bill 170,		
Mr. Potts / Loi de 2016 sur la Semaine d sensibilisation à la santé des hommes, pa		
170, M. Potts	ojet de loi	
Mr. Arthur Potts	8048	
Mr. Lorne Coe		
Mr. Paul Miller		
Hon. Dipika Damerla		
Mr. Jim McDonell		
Mr. Gilles Bisson		
Mr. Joe Dickson		
Mr. John Fraser		
Mr. Arthur Potts		
Wif. Attitut 1 Otts		
Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day		
Bill 176, Mr. Anderson / Loi de 2016 sur la Journée		
de sensibilisation à la santé mentale mat	ternelle,	
projet de loi 176, M. Anderson		
Mr. Granville Anderson		
Mrs. Gila Martow		
Ms. Peggy Sattler		
Hon. Tracy MacCharles		
Mr. Lorne Coe	8059	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	8059	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	8060	
Mrs. Julia Munro	8060	
Ms. Harinder Malhi	8061	
Mr. Mike Colle	8061	
Mr Granville Anderson	8062	

Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace Accommodation and Training Act, 201	6, Bill 177,
Ms. Sattler / Loi de 2016 sur le congé e	
d'accommodement pour les employés v	
violence familiale ou sexuelle et la form	
le lieu de travail, projet de loi 177, Mm	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	
Mr. Ted Arnott	
Ms. Catherine Fife	
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	
Mrs. Gila Martow	
Ms. Cindy Forster	
Mrs. Julia Munro	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	
Men's Health Awareness Week Act, 201	
Mr. Potts / Loi de 2016 sur la Semaine	
sensibilisation à la santé des hommes, p	rojet de loi
170, M. Potts	9060
Second reading agreed to	
Maternal Mental Health Awareness Day Bill 176, Mr. Anderson / Loi de 2016 su	
de sensibilisation à la santé mentale ma	
projet de loi 176, M. Anderson	iter nene,
Second reading agreed to	8070
Domestic and Sexual Violence Workplace	
Accommodation and Training Act, 201	
Ms. Sattler / Loi de 2016 sur le congé et	
d'accommodement pour les employés v	
violence familiale ou sexuelle et la form	
le lieu de travail, projet de loi 177, Mm	
Second reading agreed to	8070

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 10 March 2016 / Jeudi 10 mars 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR		ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES	
CP Ch M'C II	1 .	Pesticides	
Climate Change Mitigation and Low-car		Mr. Patrick Brown	8027
Economy Act, 2016, Bill 172, Mr. Murr 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement c		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	8027
une économie sobre en carbone, projet		Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	8028
M. Murray	de 101 1 / 2,	Ontario budget	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	8017	Mr. Patrick Brown	8029
Hon. Glen R. Murray		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	8029
Mr. Jim McDonell		Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
Mme France Gélinas		Mme France Gélinas	8030
Mr. Arthur Potts		Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	8030
		Hon. Eric Hoskins	8030
Ms. Peggy Sattler		Special-needs students	
Mr. John Fraser		Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	8030
Vote deferred		Hon. Liz Sandals	8030
Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016, Bill 151, N		Public transit	
/ Loi de 2016 favorisant un Ontario san	s decnets,	Mr. Michael Harris	8031
projet de loi 151, M. Murray Mr. Gilles Bisson	2021	Hon. Steven Del Duca	8031
		Ontario budget	
L'hon. Glen R. Murray		Ms. Catherine Fife	8032
Mrs. Gila Martow		Hon. Charles Sousa	8032
Ms. Cindy Forster		Climate change	
Mr. Bob Delaney		Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	8033
Mr. Gilles Bisson		Hon. Glen R. Murray	8033
Mr. Norm Miller		Housing Services Corp.	
Mme France Gélinas		Mr. Ernie Hardeman	8033
Mr. Chris Ballard		Hon. Ted McMeekin	8033
Mrs. Julia Munro		Steel industry	
Ms. Cindy Forster		Mr. Michael Mantha	8034
Mr. Norm Miller		Hon. Brad Duguid	8034
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	8026	Education	
Sign-language interpretation		Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	8035
Mr. Gilles Bisson	8027	Hon. Liz Sandals	8035
		Ontario budget	
INTRODUCTION OF VISITOR	S/	Mr. Victor Fedeli	8035
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEU		Hon. Charles Sousa	8035
		Animal protection	
Mr. Bill Walker	8027	Ms. Jennifer K. French	8036
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	8027	Hon. Yasir Naqvi	8036
Mr. Victor Fedeli	8027	Energy policies	
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	8027	Mr. Lou Rinaldi	8036
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	8027	Hon. Bob Chiarelli	8037
Mr. Bill Walker		Wind turbines	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece		Mr. Jim McDonell	8037
Member's birthday		Hon. Bob Chiarelli	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	8027		
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)		Continued on	inside back cover



Nº 150



No. 150

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 21 March 2016

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41e législature

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 21 mars 2016

Speaker Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk Deborah Deller Président L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière Deborah Deller



Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

http://www.ontla.on.ca/

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building 111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430 Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario





Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement 111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park Toronto ON M7A 1A2 Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430 Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 21 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 21 mars 2016

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to recognize David Pickles, who is in the gallery here today. He's retiring after 32 years in the Ontario public service, and he actually wanted to spend his last day of work witnessing democracy in action here. Welcome, David.

By virtue of years of service, that means he met a very young Jim Bradley in his first day as Minister of the Environment in 1985 under the Peterson government. David also serves as a Pickering councillor and Durham regional councillor, and has been elected now for six terms.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to share with you today that a wonderful person from the riding of Huron–Bruce is page captain Khushali Shah, and joining us today in the House are her mother, Sejal Shah; her father, Devang Shah; and her sister Pankti Shah. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome Lucas Dinardo and Kate Brubacher from DragonFly learning in Ottawa, who are here to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. They will be spending time with my staff today, and with me, and learning about government. They're joined by their parents, Tina and Ermanno Dinardo, and Doug Brubacher, Pamela Power and brother Neil Brubacher. Welcome to you all.

I also want to not welcome, but welcome back our member Monte Kwinter. He's actually going to be 85 tomorrow; he won't be able to join us, but it's his birthday tomorrow—85 years old.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to welcome John Nunziata, former member of Parliament for York South—Weston, as well as Clare Forndran. They're here today on behalf of Dog Tales Rescue and Sanctuary. Welcome.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Mr. Saadettin Ozcan, president of the Anatolian Heritage Foundation, and Mr. Mehmet Durmus, CEO of the Turkish Canadian Chamber of Commerce, to the House. They are having their annual event today in room 228. I invite all colleagues to drop in and say hello to our Turkish Canadian friends.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today is the mother of page captain Lauren Creasy, Shelly Sharp, and Tim

Creasy. They're in the public gallery, joining us here today

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce Sue Hotte, Kevin Gruhl, Fleurette Gruhl, Doug Hart, Henry Miron, Tess Sotirakos, Roscoe Reilley, Wendy Brown, William Barnes, Anthony Gallico, Larry Rosnik, Ron Walker and Natalie Mehra, who are here today to stop the closure of the Welland hospital.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'm thrilled to welcome page Cooper Stone from Newcastle to Queen's Park here today. He's here on his first day as part of the page program. I know his mom and dad very well, and I'm sure they're very proud of him. My whole office wishes him the best of luck. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They are just making their way in. They are from the Welland Ontario Health Coalition, Save Our Hospital. I can hear them coming; they will be there shortly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With us today in the Speaker's gallery we have the interns from the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program. They're here for a few days to observe Ontario's process. Welcome to our interns from Manitoba.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Why is the Premier allowing Ornge Air to lease a helicopter from AgustaWestland, the very same company involved in the original Ornge Air scandal currently being investigated by the OPP?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member opposite knows, there have been massive changes made at Ornge. There was a whole investigation. The governance has changed. The individuals involved have changed. There's a new board.

I don't know the details of that specific decision, but what I do know is that Ornge is a different and revitalized organization. I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to speak to the specifics.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The name on the Premier's door may have changed, but what goes on behind it, sadly, remains the same.

On March 7, Ornge Air issued a notice of its intention to negotiate the lease of an AW139 helicopter from Finmeccanica, the parent company of AgustaWestland.

There was no public tender. Ornge says this is sole-sourced because this company is the only source that can deliver by June 30.

Why is the Premier allowing Ornge Air to crawl back into bed with their partners in this scandal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just say—and I actually had the opportunity to meet a couple of Ornge pilots in a small northern airport recently. What's really critical to me and to our government, and I would think to all members of this place, is that Ornge is able to provide the very, very best service to the people of Ontario when they need it. That is of the greatest concern.

As I say, the organization has been completely changed. There are new personnel, new governance. Those changes were made as a result of an investigation, obviously, into challenges and problems at that organization. Those changes have been made.

As I say, in terms of the specific decision, we can certainly look into that in greater depth, but what's important to me is that people across this province get the service that they need from Ornge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Premier is allowing the fox back into the henhouse.

It was four years ago today that the auditor issued his report on Ornge Air's shady dealings with Agusta-Westland. The auditor found that Ornge Air paid Agusta US\$148 million for 12 helicopters when they only needed nine helicopters. Agusta then kicked back US\$2.9 million into Ornge's foundation, and then they kicked back another \$4.8 million for future marketing. All of these shady deals are currently being investigated by the OPP.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Premier allowing this deal to go on?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are very proud of the work that Ornge is doing in this province. In fact, they travel, through their helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, more than six million miles across the province, transporting more than 18,000 ill and often critically ill patients.

Ornge is well into a new chapter, with a culture that puts patients first. Surveys that have been done with patients in terms of measuring their satisfaction—they're exemplary.

I'm so proud of our new CEO. I'll be meeting him in the coming days. We have a new board of directors, as the Leader of the Opposition clearly knows, and a new senior management team. This is a new era for Ornge. I'm proud of the work that they do, and I'm proud of the work that the front-line health care workers working for Ornge do every day.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The health minister may be proud, as he says, of a sole-

sourced deal being investigated by the OPP, but let's get into the facts. There's only one word to describe Ornge Air's new deal with Agusta, and that's "shady." In February of last year, Ornge Air said it was looking to sell the helicopters they bought from Agusta. At that time, Ornge CEO Andrew McCallum said they were too expensive to maintain. He also said that few other agencies would even think of using these helicopters as an air ambulance. So can this Premier explain why on earth Ornge would now be looking at purchasing or leasing these helicopters?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there were huge challenges at this organization, which is why there have been huge changes and which is why the governance has changed and the individuals have changed. The fact is, as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said, it really is a new culture at Ornge, including new structures and new people involved.

I think it should be of prime concern to all of us that those 18,000 patients get the service they require, that they get to the hospitals they need, that they get to the health care professionals they need, and that that is done in the most expeditious way possible. That's what's happening—six million kilometres a year, 18,000 patients. It's extremely important that we recognize it's an important job these front-line health care workers do, and we support them in that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: Nothing about this deal makes sense. Last December, just four months ago, Ornge cancelled its plan to sell the Agusta helicopters. At that time, Dr. McCallum questioned the original decision to buy the helicopters. Why, then, is Ornge looking to lease the very same helicopter that the CEO said was too expensive to maintain and not suited for the job?

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier: Who is going to benefit from this deal? It's not the Ontario taxpayers. I need an explanation for this.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to comment in the final supplementary, but the only answer to "Who is going to benefit from a decision that is made at Ornge?" is the patients. That is who will benefit. That's why we made the changes that we made. All of the changes that we made were in aid of making sure that patients were at the centre of those decisions. That's who will benefit: those 18,000 patients a year who need the service of Ornge, who need those highly trained professionals to be at their best. That's who will benefit from decisions that are made at Ornge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Auditor General didn't say the Ornge scandal was benefiting patients. He said taxpayers and the people of Ontario were being ripped off. The reality is, the auditor said millions of dollars were wasted because the government let the Ornge executives run wild. Well, the same thing is happening today.

The Premier said she would be different. When she was health minister, the Deputy Premier said that she would keep a close eye on Ornge. But what we have is

the Ornge scandal 2.0.

If the Premier knew about this deal, shame on her. If the Premier didn't know about this deal, shame on her again. Is it any wonder that the people of Ontario don't trust this government?

Will the Premier pick up the phone and cancel this shady lease, yes or no? Don't pass the buck. Yes or no:

Will you cancel the shady lease?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is a very serious matter. It was a very serious matter that there needed to be changes made at Ornge, and those changes were made. There is new governance at Ornge. There is a new culture. There is a culture that focuses on the best inter-

ests of patients.

The allegations that the Leader of the Opposition is making, I have no idea what they are based in. I do not know the nature of this particular decision. But what I do know is that the governance at Ornge has changed; the personnel have changed. We have highly trained professionals who, every single day, are working in the best interests of those 18,000 patients. We support those people; we support the work that they do. We made the changes at Ornge so that they would be able to do that work unfettered.

If there is more information that is required on this particular decision, we will get that for the Leader of the Opposition, but I would think that he would be most concerned about those patients who need the support—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

TUITION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Liberal government is paying for an advertising campaign promoting free tuition, but the Premier said herself that it's not really free, and she was uncomfortable calling it free. Can the Premier explain, then, why her government is advertising something to Ontarians that she says isn't true?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the fact is, 150,000 students in this province will receive grants that will be the same as or exceed their tuition each year.

That's free tuition. What I said to the students—because I was involved in a chat online—is, yes, it needs some explanation, as student assistance has always needed some explanation, because families earn different amounts of money, kids have different circumstances. So all of that has—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Of course, all of that has to be taken into account, Mr. Speaker. But the bottom line is, 150,000 students in this province will have free tuition who wouldn't have had it before.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I'm astounded that this Premier is still using the word "free." The fact is, the Premier herself just said that she's not comfortable using the term "free" because there are costs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I guess I have to give some evidence that I'm not happy with people interjecting.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yet we see the Premier standing in front of young people with a huge sign that says "Free tuition" and we hear the President of the Treasury Board and Liberal cabinet ministers telling low-income families that they'll get free tuition, when the Premier has said publicly herself that that is not true.

1050

It's about integrity, plain and simple. Will this Premier directly communicate to her cabinet and staff her lack of comfort at misleading Ontarians and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader will withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw, Speaker.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: How on earth can the NDP oppose a proposal that is going to allow 150,000 students to have free tuition? How can they oppose that?

The Canadian Federation of Students' Gabrielle Ross-Marquette said students "have a lot to celebrate today with this commitment to fairness, equity and justice for students," particularly those from low-income families.

This is a policy that changes the face of student assistance in this province. It allows more students from low- and middle-income families to go to post-secondary, whether to college or university, without having to pay tuition, without having to accumulate debt. I would have thought—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. *Interjections.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what we oppose is a two-faced Premier. The Premier's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Stop the clock. Order.

The member will withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Withdraw, Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

That's the second time in your round that I've had to ask you to withdraw. Relax. Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier says her budget doesn't really promise free tuition. But her office, presumably on her behalf, issued a statement saying that they're using those words "deliberately ... because we need to fundamentally change the behaviour of kids and parents from low-income backgrounds."

Not only is her office saying they're deliberately using a language that is not accurate, but it's completely patronizing and insulting to hard-working, struggling Ontarians.

Will this Premier apologize for these arrogant and condescending comments made on her behalf and tell her staff that all Ontarians, including low-income families, are smart enough to understand—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I think it's astounding that the NDP would take a position against free tuition for 150,000 students.

The fact is, the point of this policy is to make it clear to people, to students and their families in lower- and middle-income families, that they will have access to post-secondary education that they didn't have access to before.

The reality is that young people from higher-income families are accessing post-secondary at higher rates than low- and middle-income families, and that's not acceptable to us, nor should it be acceptable to the NDP, nor should it be acceptable to the PCs.

It shouldn't be acceptable to anyone in this province that a student would feel that they can't go to post-secondary because of finances. We're changing that. Students will have access; 150,000 students will have free tuition. That's something to be celebrated, not opposed.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Start the clock.

New question.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. The Premier is advertising free tuition, even though she says it doesn't exist. She promised drivers she would reduce auto insurance rates by 15%, but then she said she had no intention of keeping that promise because it was a stretch goal. She promised a five-day wait time for home care. People are waiting 200 days, and she shrugs it off.

No wonder people are disappointed in this Premier and cynical about this Liberal government. People are much smarter than the Premier gives them credit for.

Will this Premier please stop with the communication hype, rein in her arrogance and start treating Ontarians with the respect that they deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just say that I think one of the things that feeds cynicism is an NDP that is supposed to stand up for people who are marginalized, that is supposed to understand that young people who don't have access to post-secondary education need the support of government, and that should understand that the 150,000 students in this province who will have free tuition need the support of government. That, I think, is something that the NDP needs to address.

The College Student Alliance says that it is "thrilled to see the 2016 budget reflect current realities. By implementing the OSG, the government has committed to a more accessible sector for all students seeking a college education..."

The leader of the third party might want to talk to the students who are actually going to benefit from this change, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people hear promises from the Liberals; they read the splashy headlines. But when you take a look, it's obvious that the government is more interested in getting a headline than keeping the promises that they make to the people who are counting on them. The Premier knows it. She said as much last week on Periscope.

Why should Ontarians trust this government when it's announcing programs that don't exist, and making promises the Premier knows won't be kept?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear with this House and with the people of Ontario. What I said last week was that there needed to be some explanation when students apply for student assistance. That is always the way it has been, and it will continue to be.

The fact is that the changes we have made, which will change the landscape of student assistance in this province, mean that of the 600,000 total in this province who are in post-secondary, 150,000 of those students will have free tuition, or better than free tuition, depending on their circumstances.

That is free tuition. It changes the way student assistance works in this province. I'm going to stand with the student organizations who have been asking for this change. We've made the change and it will benefit students across the province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, clarity is exactly what New Democrats think the people of this province deserve. You either keep your promises or you don't. Students either get free tuition or they don't. Seniors either get home care in five days or they don't. Auto

insurance rates either come down or they don't. It's no wonder that people are frustrated when this government seems more interested in hyping itself than providing the services and supports that people deserve.

When will this Premier start showing a little more integrity—or shall I call it "clarity"?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, this Premier broke the barrier for our students to continue their education in the post-secondary system.

When it comes to student aid, we are not here to learn a lesson from that party. That is the party that, when they were in office, wanted to eliminate tuition fees for our students, and they ended up doubling them. We are not going to listen to anything from them.

Mr. Speaker, 150,000 students are going to receive free education from our post-secondary universities and colleges: 95% of full-time OSAP-eligible students will receive non-repayable Ontario student grants; 90% of dependent college students, whose parents make less than \$50,000, will receive OSAP grants that are greater than the average college tuition; and 70% of dependent university students—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. Just when we thought it couldn't get any worse, the people of Ontario are learning more about what they're paying for: a culture of luxury and excess this government has allowed over at Metrolinx. Not only have we paid millions for nine months of near-empty UP ghost express trains, we now learn they wasted thousands more to show off upscale uniforms during Toronto Fashion Week. These guys just don't know when to stop, and the Premier seems unwilling to rein them in.

1100

After learning that Metrolinx spent more than \$8,000 to cancel the ill-advised fashion fiasco on top of the \$40,000 original design cost, will the Premier do her job and ensure that our transit dollars are not wasted any further on valueless vanity projects?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member for his question. I understand this issue is of importance to him and also, of course, to me.

I've had the opportunity to convey my concerns to the chair of the Metrolinx board. I have conveyed to him that it's important for all of us to make sure that we continue to focus on our core mandate of planning, building, operating and supporting more transit here in the GTHA and beyond, including communities like Kitchener-Waterloo. In fact, that is the work that the team at Metrolinx is focused on.

I've also informed the chair of the board that Metrolinx folks will be required to work more closely with the Ministry of Transportation to ensure that, going forward, we continue to be completely in alignment with respect to making sure we deliver on that mandate. I'd be happy to deliver more information in the follow-up questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: The minister's stated disappointment last week does nothing to restore the tax-payers' money that they continue to waste. What a fashion faux pas. I mean, I'm sure we're all disappointed that the minister didn't get his chance to do Zoolander's blue steel on the runway in retro-chic train couture, but the fact is that Metrolinx is charged with transit planning. This needs to be project transit, not Project Runway. This Premier is charged with overseeing billions in future transit planning through Metrolinx, and yet we continue to see her allow our precious transit dollars to be wasted again and again.

Will the Premier tell us how she expects anyone to trust her to oversee billions in transit investments when we see that money being thrown down the runway?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I said in my first answer to the member opposite, I've already had that conversation with the chair of the board to make sure that we are completely focused on the mandate that I've been given and that Metrolinx has.

I will say that for close to two years now, I've had the privilege of working closely with board chair Rob Prichard, with president and CEO Bruce McCuaig and with all of the board members and senior executive members at Metrolinx. Here's what I've learned: They are an extraordinarily committed group of people who understand their mandate and who are delivering on that mandate. In fact, over the last couple of years, what we've seen—since 2003—is that Metrolinx and GO Transit have, for example, among many other things, built 14 new GO stations, rebuilt four existing GO stations, extended our crucial rail network by nearly 90 kilometres, added 31,000 parking spots, added over 200 new railcars, over 150 new single-level buses and will add more buses in the years to come. We will also—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Cindy Forster: The Welland hospital site of the Niagara Health System serves tens of thousands of families in my riding of Welland, some of whom are with us in the gallery here today. The Liberal government has decided to go ahead with plans to close yet another hospital in south Niagara, based on a limited and short-sighted report issued in 2012.

This was a decision that the Liberal government made without any consultation with families in my community. This so-called restructuring of the Niagara Health System will be one of the largest in Ontario's history, forcing the closure of five hospitals in my community and forcing

the most vulnerable to travel almost an hour—in some cases, more than an hour—to access emergency care.

Will the minister explain to this House and to my friends who have joined me today why the Liberal government refuses to reverse this ill-informed and short-sighted decision?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This decision, of course, and the plans that the Niagara Health System is following—they accepted the recommendations of Dr. Kevin Smith, who spent a great deal of time consulting not only with health care professionals, but with literally thousands of members of the Niagara community to come up with a set of recommendations as well as to ensure that the sustainability of the health care system is there for Niagara, and that it's also the highest quality of services that the people deserve.

The Niagara Health System, with a planning grant that we've provided of \$26.2 million already, is proceeding. The board has accepted those recommendations. They have struck a large committee, which has significant community representation, not only representation from municipal leadership and municipal councils, including Welland, Wainfleet, Port Colborne—all of those areas that deserve to have those quality health services. They're working through a plan, which they will at one point be submitting to us. We'll consider it. We'll consider it with the local LHIN. We'll make a decision on the basis of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: We know that Niagara has one of the highest populations of seniors in the province. The government's decision to close another hospital would mean that a family facing an emergency in my community would have to drive as long as over an hour to reach an emergency department, and even longer if you have to rely on public transportation.

Worse, occupancy rates currently across the Niagara Health System are at an alarming rate, and the closing of the Welland hospital will have devastating impacts on capacity levels for the remaining hospitals, putting my community's health at risk.

Will the minister put an immediate stop to the short-sighted decision to close the Welland hospital?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, what I won't put a stop to is the community-led process that is guided by the best experts in that region and across the province to determine how to provide the best health services for the people of the Niagara region.

In fact, I know that NHS did reveal what their plans are for the Welland location. I know the reaction from the local community. There was a lot of positive reaction to the proposals, including on issues like long-term care, increasing the number of beds and two new buildings, which will provide significant numbers of services.

But, really—and I know the member from Welland knows this, because she was part of a meeting that I had several weeks ago with the mayors from the regions to discuss specifically this issue—this is a long process that is being undertaken in an appropriate fashion through the

leadership of the NHS but in close co-operation and consultation with everybody concerned.

FARM SAFETY

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. My riding of Cambridge and North Dumfries is partly rural and home to many family farms, including my neighbours'.

I know the farmers in my riding are very concerned about safe farming practices and workplace safety, so I was pleased to hear that the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association was once again celebrating Canadian agricultural safety week.

Although it's always good to see events that illustrate the importance of farm safety, we also need to be sure that our farmers are aware of potential safety risks and what they can do to mitigate them.

In Ontario, we have close to 50,000 farms and 86,000 primary agricultural workers. We need to ensure that we are setting up our farmers to be safe. This is especially significant when we think of children, who may be helping out with work on the family farm.

Speaker, can the minister please tell this House how Canadian agricultural safety week benefits our farmers?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Cambridge this morning for her question. I know she spends a lot of time in the North Dumfries part of her riding, which is a great agricultural base for the riding of Cambridge.

Last week was Canadian agriculture safety week, an annual public education campaign which aims to reduce the risk of accidents and hazards on our farms throughout Ontario. Our ministry is proud to work with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, recognizing the importance of on-farm safety programming. Additionally, we're pleased to support Workplace Safety and Prevention Services of Ontario in their delivery of farm safety education programs across the province.

This year's theme is how to be an ag-safe family and more specifically, on keeping kids safe, and focused on encouraging children and young adults to remember and stay safe while helping out with the chores and responsibilities on a farm each and every day.

As the member mentioned, it's always a tragic event when someone gets injured while working on a farm, and it's only made worse when that individual is indeed a child

By focusing on young farmers, we're encouraging them to develop safe farming practices. Mr. Speaker, one of the great supporters of agriculture in Ontario, the member from St. Catharines, had a meeting last week with regard to farm safety in the Niagara Peninsula.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the minister. As we all know, agricultural work is often hazardous and can lead to serious workplace injuries. People in my

riding of Cambridge and throughout the Waterloo region work in the agricultural sector and face these inherent risks each and every day.

Tragically, when my son was 14 years old, he lost a friend to a farming accident. The teenager had climbed his family's silo to check on the level of corn in the silo, when he was overcome by fumes and fell in.

Our government understands that the risks involved in the agricultural sector are very real. I understand that in 2006, our government extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include farming operations for the first time ever.

1110

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you tell my constituents what else our government is doing to protect the health and safety of Ontarians and families who work in our agricultural sector?

Hon. Jeff Leal: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd really like to thank the member for that excellent question because we all value the hard work that farmers do every single day.

At the Ministry of Labour, we know that prevention is the key and that awareness training really helps prevent those workplace accidents. This holds true for farms, as well. It's not just industry; it's farms, as well.

Knowing the risks involved in the work and knowing the rights and the responsibilities you have as a worker in Ontario makes all the difference for people who actually work on those farms. I think it's always important that we should remind people to train properly, to be aware of the dangers, and that will help keep everybody safe on the farms.

We conduct, at the Ministry of Labour, both proactive and reactive visits to ensure that we have the best practices in place, and we will charge those people who aren't living up to their responsibilities.

We all need to be in this together to make sure that Ontario's farm operations are as safe and as productive as they can be.

TUITION

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is to the Premier. The Premier says she's worried about the free tuition plan. In fact, the Premier now claims that "it's free with some explanation required." Allison Jones from the Canadian Press had a headline that read "Wynne Says She Worried About Pitching Tuition as Free...."

However, the Premier didn't have a problem calling it free tuition on March 1. In fact, the Premier actually responded to four questions that day by shouting to the mountains about free tuition. It's only when students looked at the fine print that the Premier added her asterisk. The Premier knows that the government's original claims of free tuition are simply wrong.

Mr. Speaker, this government can't even get free tuition right. Can they get anything right?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said, 150,000 students in this province will have free tuition. That is the

case. Young people who live in families of modest means will have access to post-secondary education in a way they have not had before.

Now, I actually understand, coming from the PCs, that this might not be a policy that they would support, but from the NDP—I was very surprised that they wouldn't support young people having more access to post-secondary and the government playing a role in that.

I just want to quote from Spencer Nestico-Semianiw from OUSA, who said, "These are sweeping improvements that will dramatically improve financial aid for our students. Students will receive more grants, and for many of them, tuition will be free."

The fact is the Ontario university student association has been advocating for these changes. The student groups have been asking us to make these changes. We have, and those 150,000 students will have free tuition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Again to the Premier: When is free not free? When this Liberal government gets their hands on a plan, we see it time and time again. Just look at the spin: "some explanation required," "there are caveats," the program will "evolve." Those are more aspirational stretch goals. That's all we ever get from this government

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, the Liberals are taking away \$165 million worth of tax credits from students.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier come clean? Will the Premier admit this isn't about helping students; this is about distracting from the government's scandal, waste and mismanagement?

Interiections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member for that question. I also want to remind the member that his party voted against the 30% Off Ontario Tuition Grant in the past, and his party actually wanted to abolish OSAP. They wanted to give student aid based on merit, not on the needs of the students.

Mr. Speaker, 250,000 students—80% of OSAP-eligible students—will have less debt than they would have under the current OSAP. Mr. Speaker, 95% of OSAP-eligible students will receive non-repayable Ontario student grants, and 150,000 students are going to receive grants from the government which will be equal to or even maybe more than their tuition fees.

As I said earlier, this Premier broke the barrier for low-income students to continue their education in our colleges and universities.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings: second time.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is for the Minister of Health. Good morning, Minister.

Seniors in Windsor and Tecumseh are worried about the Liberal plan to nearly double the cost of their prescription drugs. Under the Liberal budget, the cost of the deductible for the vast majority of seniors will increase by 70% this summer. Seniors living on fixed incomes simply can't afford this. People are already struggling to pay the rent and to put food on the table.

My question to the minister is simple and straightforward: Exactly how many of Ontario's two million seniors will be forced to pay more for their prescription

drugs because of this Liberal government?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know some erroneous information has been out there which doesn't accurately reflect the number of seniors who will benefit from this program. The truth is that roughly 25% of Ontario's two million seniors will benefit from paying no annual deductible at all. There's a significant number—173,000— who are currently paying a \$100 annual deductible, who will join roughly 300,000—

Mr. Paul Miller: How about the 75%?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —who will join more than a quarter of a million of the lowest-income seniors who will pay no annual deductible, roughly 25% of the total seniors in this province. It's pretty remarkable that that number will translate into that positive space.

There are also other important changes that we've made, which reflect that we are the most generous province by far in the entire country with regard to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, obviously by the mathematical gobbledygook you're refusing to tell us how many seniors are going to be paying more for their prescription drugs.

Our seniors aren't rich. They watch every penny, and the Premier wants to nearly double the cost of their prescriptions. This is the wrong thing to do. We should be expanding access to universal prescription drugs, not forcing seniors to pay more.

When will the minister stop making excuses, actually stand up for the seniors in this province and put a stop to the Premier's plan?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I implore—in fact, I'm begging the NDP to just one time in this Legislature mention that 170,000 more seniors, the lowest-income seniors, those who that party would purport to support—I don't understand why it's impossible for them to actually reference that positive development.

The out-of-pocket expense for seniors in this province is \$277 per year. The next closest province in Canada is more than twice that. In fact, in some provinces the out-of-pocket expenditures are as high as \$1,000 a year.

This is a very progressive policy. It means that those that can afford it will be asked to pay a little bit more. But a quarter of the seniors, those low-income seniors who I would have hoped the NDP would support in this process—but that was the old NDP; they can't mention that number.

GOVERNMENT ANTI-RACISM PROGRAMS

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate.

In 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations first proclaimed March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This day commemorates the Sharpeville Massacre, a day where police opened fire and killed 69 peaceful protestors who were demonstrating against South Africa's apartheid "pass law." While this was overt racism, we know that in Ontario there still exist a number of individual, cultural and systemic barriers that prevent racial minorities from realizing full equality.

Could the minister inform the members of this House about what Ontario has done to address racism?

1120

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the MPP for Durham for the question.

Today marks the 50th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, a day that annually—

Applause.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Yes, it's an important day.

This day reminds us to fight racism and related forms of intolerance and discrimination worldwide.

Ontario has long been a champion of equality and an international beacon for cultural pluralism. Ontario was the first jurisdiction in Canada to prohibit discrimination based on race when it passed the Ontario Human Rights Code. Ontario was the birthplace of the Human Rights Commission in Canada. By 1977, other jurisdictions, including the federal government, would follow Ontario's leadership and create their own commissions.

Recently, I joined the Premier to demonstrate Ontario's continued leadership on this file through our Anti-Racism Directorate. I look forward to keeping the members of this House up to date on an ongoing basis on this incredible initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Minister. When the Premier announced the Anti-Racism Directorate, she highlighted dynamics that have refocused modern issues: movements like Black Lives Matter, the ongoing history of police street checks and the debates around the Syrian refugee crisis. It is clear that we need to take greater and more coordinated action against racism.

It has only been one month since the directorate was announced and I understand that there is still a lot more work to be done. But could the minister inform the members of this House on how our government is laying the foundation for the new Anti-Racism Directorate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, I want to thank the member for Durham.

Ontario's new Anti-Racism Directorate was formed to remove social and economic barriers that prevent our province from achieving true equality and to apply a wide anti-racism lens to government policy.

Over the past month, I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of people at the ministry. We've hired a new associate deputy minister to take the lead with the directorate. I've also had a few meetings with important stakeholders, community-based organizations and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. I've met with partners, like the Colour of Poverty and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians.

The Anti-Racism Directorate is determining how we can help fight racism to ensure that everyone here in Ontario has equal opportunity to succeed. In the coming months, I'm committed to continuing engaging and collaborating with stakeholders and partners to achieve true equality here in the province of Ontario.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

This government has failed Shania Paige. Ms. Paige is a young woman suffering from a mental illness. As Christina Blizzard of the Toronto Sun noted, this "isn't just a human tragedy of immense proportion." She wrote, "It's an infuriating, terrifying and pathetic indictment of the hypocrisy we spout about mental illness in this"—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry. The member will withdraw. You cannot quote something from the outside that you can't say here. So please withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I withdraw.

This was a case of someone who was in desperate need of mental health services and couldn't get the help she needed. Is the minister embarrassed he tells people to seek help while the very help they need isn't there because this government has cut it?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite is correct that this is a very, very serious issue. It's one that I personally take very seriously. It's also a complex issue. But there's no question that we need to ensure that, when an individual is facing a mental health crisis, they're provided, at that moment in time, with the right supports that they need in order that the correct pathway is followed.

We don't want to see those individuals moving where there could potentially be a violent episode against themselves or other persons or whether it could head down that path of the criminal justice system, because that's the wrong path for these individuals. We need to make sure, and we need to invest money that will go to provide those supports at that moment of time so that the person gets the right supports, they get connected with the emergency services that they require, the community resources that

they require and the primary care resources that they need to be stabilized and get better.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Minister, you're a lot of talk with zero action. It has been over a decade and you keep saying the same things over and over and more people are dying or ending up in our corrections services with zero support. You would have thought that this government would have learned something from the death of Ashley Smith in 2007. Her death in solitary confinement in a Kitchener institution was tragic, but just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, this government continues to cut much-needed mental health services.

This government loves to talk and tweet about Bell Let's Talk Day but failed to actually offer any real help to those in need.

Mr. Speaker, what will it take? How many more people will have to die before this government takes the funding of mental health services seriously?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I can't believe that the member opposite would take an individual's crisis and use it for such political partisan reasons.

We're investing over \$3 billion in our health care system specifically for mental health and addictions. That continues to go up each and every year: 137 million new dollars over the next three years as we engage in a new phase of mental health supports—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member who asked the question, come to order, please, and the member behind you, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: There was \$810 million last year alone for our community mental health supports across this province.

I know there's more work to be done, of course. We'll never reach that point of providing those supports that individuals need unless we work together; implement the best advice that we're getting from, for example, the leadership advisory council that we have which is advising me; making those important investments; and making sure that individuals who are facing these crises and these challenges get the support they need.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier.

Last week, I travelled to northwestern Ontario along with the member for Kenora–Rainy River and met with Grand Chief Fiddler, Deputy Grand Chief Fox and other leaders from the NAN communities.

We heard from Chief Cutfeet about how few in his community have regular access to doctors, nurses or specialists for diseases such as diabetes, which is rampant throughout the NAN territories.

Sioux Lookout has the highest rate of rheumatic fever in the world—a treatable, preventable yet deadly illness if not acted upon. In fact, two four-year-old children have died from this preventable illness in the last two years.

This is 2016, Speaker. The Premier has been the critic for aboriginal affairs. She knows these problems exist. Why is she doing nothing to change such an intolerable situation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: We in this government take this issue very seriously. I have been in contact with Chief Fiddler on a number of occasions. When this most recent situation developed, I was in contact with him. We are working on ways to deal with this issue. This situation is not going to continue. We are making every effort at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, working in collaboration with other ministries—the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment and, indeed, other ministries across the government. We are taking a wholegovernment approach to this.

Last week, I was in northwestern Ontario and I had several discussions about this issue, as it involved climate change and as it involved safe drinking water. It's all a part of the whole. We have to tackle these issues as an entity. We are doing that as a government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would say that not much is going on when it comes to what this government claims their relationship is with First Nations communities.

Three weeks ago, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation declared a health care state of emergency in this province. They're reeling from endemic suicides; living in poor, crowded housing conditions; and their communities have undrinkable water. They have for decades, Speaker. None of these problems are new. They have existed for decades.

Will this Premier act today to address the dire health crisis in Sioux Lookout, in the region and across the NAN territories, and stop the suicides that are occurring there?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister? Hon. David Zimmer: The Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We are taking this very seriously and, frankly, I agree with Chief Fiddler when he declared the state of emergency for the population represented by NAN. I have talked with Chief Fiddler and I have talked with Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day. In fact, next week, I'm going to be sitting down with those chiefs and others, and federal health minister Jane Philpott, to specifically and emphatically discuss this state of emergency and what we need to do, collectively, at all levels of government to be able to address this.

The party opposite knows this is not something that can be solved overnight. The prudent thing is to have these conversations, to actually work with First Nations rather than without, which seems to be what they would suggest doing; to actually work on a collaborative action plan that will, in a significant, tangible, realistic way, begin to address these issues.

I'm looking forward as well to the federal Liberal budget tomorrow. I've got confidence that it's going to speak to some of these issues with regard to First Nations.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question today is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Last Thursday, the minister was in Thunder Bay to announce that the Ontario government would be making a significant investment through the Green Investment Fund to provide First Nation communities with the training, tools and infrastructure they need to address climate change.

Climate change is a matter of concern for all Ontarians, which is why our government has taken small and large steps over many years to help reduce Ontario's impact. Climate change will also dramatically affect indigenous communities, jeopardizing the First Nations and Métis ways of life, health, territories and resources. Can the minister tell us more about these investments?

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, it was a pleasure to be joined last week by my colleagues the members for Thunder Bay–Superior North and Thunder Bay–Atikokan at the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corp. last week to announce this important new initiative.

First Nation communities, Laurentian University's Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources—we will be working with First Nations and the university to develop adaptation plans to help First Nation communities prepare for the effects of climate change; to build the technical capacity in order for First Nation communities to take advantage of cap-and-trade; and to develop a northern Ontario climate change impact study using the data from these adaptation plans.

Speaker, ensuring First Nations have the tools they need to fight and adapt to climate change is important. First Nations and our universities will work together. They will combine their unique skills and special knowledge. This is the best way to do it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's great to hear that our government recognizes the importance of engaging indigenous communities on climate change. It's clear that our government is committed to working with indigenous people in Ontario to address the impacts of climate change felt by their communities.

I understand that our government is also taking steps to help remote First Nations communities reduce their dependency on diesel fuel. This will help them develop the capacity to become more self-sufficient through the use of renewable energy and open up economic opportunities. Can the minister please tell us more about how this government is supporting indigenous communities towards this goal?

Hon. David Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I also announced last week that Ontario will invest \$8 million to develop advanced micro-grid solutions to remote First Nation communities.

Continuous diesel-fired electricity generation in our remote First Nation communities emits an estimated 65 metric kilotonnes of greenhouse gases annually. This is equivalent to about 15,000 cars on the road. This is not healthy for those northern communities. It is not healthy for our province.

A shift to micro-grids from diesel fuel is vital in our fight against climate change. It is imperative that we begin preparing First Nation communities to adapt to climate change now. I look forward to working with our partner First Nations to see that real progress is made on this issue.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question today is for the Minister of Health.

Earlier this year, the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance was told they would be getting \$2.5 million less than they were expecting from the province's Minister of Health. We have seen cuts to nursing positions and physician services across the province, and now my constituents are worried the services they depend on may be next on the chopping block.

Does the minister have any plans to cut more services at the Sydenham District Hospital in Wallaceburg over the next fiscal year?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: From that question, the sense I'm getting from that member opposite is that there might be an inkling that he would support our budget this year, because we have a 1% increase in the base for every single hospital across the province—in fact, we're even providing additional funds for hospitals that are designated rural or small—plus \$350 million which is going to our hospitals across the province, which actually works out to about a 2.1% increase in the budget, in the line—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On average.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —on average, for our hospitals across the province.

These are important investments. I'm happy to talk to him about the specific concern that he has. But the truth is, Mr. Speaker, we're increasing our hospital funding, and it will make a significant difference, right across the board, to the level of services that people deserve in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Minister of Health: Over the last week, people in Wallaceburg, Walpole Island First Nation and throughout Chatham-Kent told me that they are very worried about the future of the emergency department at the Sydenham District

Hospital. The facts are that 13 years of Liberal scandals, waste and mismanagement are responsible for taking away funding for essential services like health care.

The people of Wallaceburg, Walpole Island and Chatham-Kent depend on Sydenham hospital's emergency department. My question this morning is very simple: Is the emergency department at the Sydenham hospital going to remain open as a fully functioning, 24-hour emergency department?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: There's nothing that I'm aware of that would change the level and quality of health care provided to the patients in Chatham-Kent—to the hospital reference.

But I do want to mention—because you've mentioned Chatham-Kent as well, if we can talk about that area for a minute—that there was a very important development that took place just in the past few days with regard to the hospital in Leamington.

I think this Legislature knows that we provided over \$1 million to try to attract obstetricians and gynecologists to that hospital, to keep the birthing centre, to keep that obstetrics ward open. Well, the first obstetrician confirmed that he is coming to Leamington. I'm very proud to announce that the obstetrics unit, that birthing centre, will remain open and it has a new obstetrician.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Last week, we learned that Metrolinx spent tens of thousands of public dollars to design special fashionable uniforms for the Union Pearson Express, and spent thousands more to get the uniforms featured during fashion week in Toronto, only to later drop out of the event.

We know Metrolinx does nothing without the approval of the Minister of Transportation. It was the current Premier who committed to the UP Express's flawed business model six years ago, when she was transportation minister. But instead of taking responsibility for UP Express, the minister has scapegoated public servants who were only doing what they were told to do.

Will the minister stop pretending that Metrolinx is independent of his ministry and finally accept responsibility for the UP Express blunders?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Parkdale—High Park for her question.

As I said earlier today, I have had the chance to speak with or communicate with the chair of the Metrolinx board. There's a very clear understanding that the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx will continue to work closely together as we fulfill the mandate that the people of Ontario have given this government for Metrolinx and the ministry to design, build, operate, support and sustain additional transit.

Earlier today, I had the chance, at length, to mention a number of the initiatives that we've moved forward with, that we've had tremendous success with, that we've made more progress on. There is, as we all know, a significant requirement to make sure that we continue to invest in transit here in the 416 and the 905 and beyond, across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. I have no doubt that the team at Metrolinx, with whom I've worked closely now for close to two years, will continue to work with us to fulfil that mandate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the minister: Whenever Metrolinx has appeared in the newspaper recently, it hasn't been exactly good news: Union Pearson Express trains with expensive uniforms but few passengers; a mile-long bridge carving through the Davenport community without public agreement; and a gas plant suddenly appearing in plans for the Eglinton Crosstown, again without public consultation.

How can the public trust Metrolinx to serve the public interest, and spend billions in public dollars, when the ministry is making the real decisions behind closed

doors, without any public support?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I have to say I categorically reject the premise of that member's question on the

follow-up.

Just a few days ago, the Premier of Ontario, thanks in large part to her leadership, stood alongside the team at Metrolinx and other members from this caucus at the Keelesdale station for the Eglinton Crosstown. Let's remember that the Eglinton Crosstown, at \$5.3 billion, is the single-largest public transit project in Ontario history, and it's taking place because this Premier and this government have made the commitment and made the hard decisions to build transit. We're building that transit, working closely, of course, with Metrolinx.

What would be most helpful in this Legislature, occasionally, is if members of the NDP would support the budgets that we put forward, which will help us fund the transit that they allege they think we need in this

region.

RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for

Etobicoke North on a point of order.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I respectfully invite all members of the Legislature to a reception held by the Turkish Canadian community, the Anatolian Heritage Federation, taking place immediately after question period in rooms 228 and 230.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to take a moment just to offer some advice and a request. The advice is that I believe that every member in this House knows, or should know, the type of language that is not parliamentary. I would also include staff who may help you with questions—putting that into the questions, they should know, or do know, that it's unparliamentary. I've heard too many things over the last little while that imply that you're saying it for the theatre effect, and I'm going

to have to start clamping down even tighter than I am. So I'm asking all members to co-operate. You know what you cannot say, and I think it has to stop. Thank you.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to introduce a number of special guests who are here today to celebrate what would have been George Leslie Mackay's 172nd birthday. In the gallery today, I'm honoured to have Director General Hsu from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, as well as representatives from the Canadian Mackay Committee, Taiwanese Canadian Association of Toronto, Taiwan Entrepreneurs Society Taipei/Toronto, Taiwan Merchants Association of Toronto, Taiwanese Canadian Community Service Association, Formosa Evergreen Senior Citizens Centre, Taiwanese United Church in Toronto, Global Asian Business Federation of Canada, Young Taiwanese Merchants Association of Toronto, Taiwan Macroview Television, and many others. I want to welcome them all to Queen's Park and thank them for being here today to recognize the former life of George Leslie Mackay.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome a friend of mine originally from St. Clair Beach: Jordan Vukanovich, who's the national account executive with CareerBuilder Canada. He's here to talk about how we can match employees with employers and skill sets as

well.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce Sue Hotte from the Niagara Health Coalition. Natalie Mehra is here today as well from the Ontario Health Coalition, and a couple of my constituents, Don Huneault and Henry Miron.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not trying to bring attention to the issue, but just a reminder that all vibrating devices are picked up by the microphones and do impact our wonderful sound people. So please make sure they're in your holsters.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COLORECTAL CANCER

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today in awareness of National Colorectal Cancer Month. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer to date and the second most common cancer cause of death of men and women throughout Canada.

Colorectal cancer is preventable, yet thousands of Canadians are diagnosed and die of this disease each year. The majority of cases begin as benign growths in the lining of the large bowel and then move onward to other organs. Therefore, identification and removal of these polyps is critical in preventing the development of colorectal cancer.

Age, heredity, diet, weight, alcohol consumption and smoking are all factors in the development of this disease. More than 90% of cases occur in people aged 50 and over. Sometimes symptoms are not always obvious, but they could include blood in the stool, stomach pains and unexpected weight loss. The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is through preventive measures like screening tests. There are a number of screening tests available to Ontarians who may be concerned about developing this form of cancer.

Mr. Speaker, 800,000 Ontarians do not have access to a family doctor. Those between ages 50 and 74 can access a fecal occult blood test from their pharmacy, a nurse practitioner or Telehealth Ontario. Cancer Care Ontario continues to coordinate this service.

In Ontario, there is a 67% relative survival ratio, although in 2015 we saw 9,200 new colorectal cancer cases that caused 3,350 deaths.

Colorectal cancer is an increasing concern, and I'm pleased to note that March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION TOURNAMENT

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's that time of year when, for a lot of kids, hockey season is coming to an end. A lot of playoffs are going on. The Little Current Howland Minor Hockey Association hosted the NOHA Midget House League Tournament of Champions in Little Current on Manitoulin Island—such teams as the East Nipissing Clarion Resort Vipers, Hornepayne Bears, Kirkland Lake Gold Blue Devils, Valley East Urban Windows and Doors, Little Current Flyers, Massey Predators, Powassan Hawks, and Temiskaming Shores Roosters Bar and Grill. These kids played like giants over the course of the weekend and had everybody on the edge of their seats.

I was watching some in my riding of Algoma–Manitoulin, particularly the Predators out of Massey. They had tenacity and never gave up in any of their games and continued to plug on.

We had the group from the Flyers from Little Current. They played an immense, powerful game. They had to win to get in. They were down 6-3. With about four minutes left, they came back to tie. They were this close to going in.

But at the end of the day, it was the Hornepayne Bears from Algoma–Manitoulin who got to the finals: kids like Eric Bayford, Silas Hoffman, Jaedyn Orr, Jarid Trudel, Cameron Boere, Mekenzie Kistemaker, Logan Latoski, Sawyer Stewart, Nathan Swereda, Nicholas Swereda, Curtis Swereda, Brandyn Bell and Tommy Prud'homme. You guys played like giants. You guys played with boys and girls. There was no contact, and it was great hockey, Mr. Speaker.

It doesn't matter who won. At the end of the day, these kids all showed end-to-end action, and they showed they had a heart of gold.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I didn't know the NHL was looking for a new play-by-play guy.

PATRICK ROCCA

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak about this year's winner of the Agnes Macphail Award.

Agnes Macphail, as you know, was once described as "the most important woman in public life that Canada has produced in the 20th century." She received this distinction as she was the first woman to sit in Parliament from Owen Sound and in the Ontario Legislature from a riding that encompassed my area of Beaches–East York. In her honour, I've asked Canada Post to put her image on a Canadian postage stamp.

The Agnes Macphail Award is given to an outstanding volunteer and contributor to community life who embodies Agnes's motto of "Think globally; act locally." This year, Patrick Rocca won the award for his outstanding commitment to the East York community.

Patrick contributes meaningfully to the spirit of the East York community through fundraising, volunteering and sponsorships. The community is pleased with his commitment because it is further exemplified by the many initiatives that Patrick supports and promotes, such as the Thorncliffe children's breakfast program, the annual Thanksgiving turkey giveaway, Flemingdon's New Circles and Maurice Cody's Dirt to Turf project.

Not only is he involved in various fundraising and community activities that support growth and development, Patrick also was the first real estate broker to become an ambassador for and a proponent of the inaugural wear Plaid for Dad event that was raising funds and awareness for Prostate Cancer Canada.

I stand in the House and formally recognize this outstanding citizen and member of the Beaches–East York community. I invite all interested members to show up at East York Civic Centre on Thursday, March 24 to see the Agnes Macphail Award ceremony where Mr. Rocca will be receiving his award.

GEORGE LESLIE MACKAY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: On behalf of the people of Oxford and the Ontario PC caucus, I'm pleased to rise to recognize the contribution of Oxford's George Leslie Mackay on what would have been his 172nd birthday.

Mackay was born and raised in Zorra, part of Oxford county, but most people agree that the island of Formosa, now Taiwan, was his home. It was where he married and raised a family. It was where he made a significant contribution to health care and education that lives on to this day.

Mackay travelled to Taiwan as a missionary 1871. He quickly fell in love with the island and embraced the

culture, spending 16 hours a day studying the language. Mackay had an unusual method of outreach: practising dentistry. Over 30 years, he claimed, he pulled as many as 40,000 teeth. He returned to visit Oxford, and while in Canada raised money to help in Taiwan. When he returned, he built a hospital, a boarding school for girls, a middle school and Oxford College. The college is now a museum dedicated to Mackay, "the black-bearded barbarian."

His legacy lives on to this day. In 2001, Taiwan issued a commemorative postage stamp that marked the centenary of his death, and there is now a modern Mackay Memorial Hospital in Taipei, a long way from the clinic he started 150 years ago.

As MPP for Oxford, I am also proud of another legacy he created: a strong relationship between Oxford and Taiwan, a legacy we honour by continuing and growing our friendship.

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this today.

MAYA MIKHAEL

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is always a pleasure to rise in the House to talk about special events and the incredible people of Windsor West and the greater Windsor area.

Today, I have the distinct pleasure of announcing that 10-year-old Maya Mikhael, an exceptional young lady from Windsor, is the recipient of the provincial honour of the 2016 Leading Girls Building Communities recognition certificate for exceptional leadership in working to improve the lives of others in Windsor.

1310

This recognition is only given to young girls 18 years or younger at the time of nomination, and the nominee cannot have been nominated in the past. Nominations for this recognition must be made by a member of provincial Parliament, and community members are needed to provide supporting references. Without hesitation, I was pleased to nominate Maya Mikhael for this recognition, and there was no shortage of supporters from our community. Through her various fundraising efforts such as Maya's Friends lemonade stand, Maya has raised thousands of dollars and collected vast quantities of food that have benefited the Windsor area through organizations like the food bank, Street Help and the Windsor Youth Centre

I am thrilled to announce that Maya has been chosen as the recipient for this honour and I am so proud to have an outstanding, dedicated community supporter like Maya in Windsor.

WESTON LIONS CLUB

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am proud to stand in the House today to recognize the 75th charter anniversary of the Weston Lions Club. The Lions Club of Weston was charted in the town of Weston, Ontario in 1941. This group of dedicated volunteers has not only built the

recreation arena and swimming pool located at the Weston Lions Park but also continues to operate the arena, staff the snack bar inside and manage the recreation hall facilities. The Weston Lions arena is run as a non-profit operation to serve the community and raises money through the snack bar, a pancake breakfast at the annual opening of the farmers' market, and through a partnership with the Toronto Blue Jays baseball club.

The club's members are extremely dedicated and work tirelessly for their community. The Weston Lions Club has generously chosen to assist a number of local community and international organizations with their programs and projects, including Weston Area Emergency Support, which is a local food bank; Frontlines, a local organization that assists youth; TDSB's Toronto Foundation for Student Success; Lions Foundation of Canada; Youth Without Shelter; York West Active Living Centre, which has many programs for seniors; and many other groups that have been designated by the Lions Club to receive gifts totalling over \$60,000.

Congratulations to the Weston Lions on your 75th charter anniversary. Thank you for all that you do for the Weston community and beyond. Your dedication to volunteerism and giving back to the community is truly inspirational.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to rise today in recognition of World Down Syndrome Day. Today marks the 11th anniversary of World Down Syndrome Day. This year's theme is "My Friends, My Community." The goal is to get the world talking about how inclusive environments benefit everyone. Down Syndrome International wants to show the world how persons with Down syndrome live and participate in the community alongside family, friends, peers and the public.

To get people talking, they are encouraging everyone to wear lots of socks, perhaps even three socks, for three copies of chromosome 21. The goal is to wear something that people will ask you about so that you can start a conversation about World Down Syndrome Day.

I would like to take a moment to recognize Amy Boudrias, who has done an outstanding job of raising awareness of World Down Syndrome Day in the Kincardine area. Amy has challenged local businesses to create fun and unique window displays filled with lots of socks. She had a tremendous success, and I know that many people will be having important conversations today because of Amy's hard work.

We all know the power of an inclusive environment and of equal opportunities to participate. Today, let's take a moment to think about what more we can do to make sure everyone has a safe and inclusive community to thrive in.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker: Last fall, I was in Ukraine with constituents of Etobicoke Centre, where we met with

soldiers who were wounded during the Russian-backed invasion of Ukraine. These young people said that they were fighting for freedom and democracy, values that we as Canadians hold dear.

Today, Ukraine is at war and the situation is dire. Russia has annexed Crimea, and Russian-backed forces have invaded and occupied part of eastern Ukraine. This war touches all of us, Speaker. Thousands are dead and one million civilians have been displaced. The soldiers I met with have shown incredible courage. They are fighting state-of-the-art equipment, in many cases with outdated weapons. Many have refused medical treatment so that they can stay at the front and continue to fight.

One of those soldiers is Nadiya Savchenko. She's a Ukrainian pilot who was captured and then transferred to Russia illegally almost two years ago. Ms. Savchenko is now being sentenced on fabricated charges in Russia and has undergone a trial that even the US administration has referred to as "farcical." She has endured repeated interrogations and solitary confinement. Recently, in protest of her treatment, she undertook a hunger strike, even refusing water.

Canadians from across the country have been protesting Ms. Savchenko's treatment, and I'd like to applaud the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stéphane Dion, who recently issued a statement calling on Russia to release Ms. Savchenko.

I urge the global community, including Canada, to continue to press for her release and to continue to support the Ukrainian people as they fight for their freedom. This is important, not only because Ms. Savchenko's human rights have been violated and she needs our help, and not only because the war is a humanitarian crisis and the Ukrainian people need our help, but because the war in Ukraine is a threat to freedom and democracy—values that, as Canadians, we hold dear.

SANDVINE INC.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to share with you and members of this House news of a very important announcement that took place in my region last week.

Fifteen years ago, the high-tech company Sandvine was just starting out, at around the same time that our local economy was in transition. We were losing low-skilled jobs. But today there's a much different picture in my region. Thanks to investments in innovative technology, we are seeing the growth of high-paying, highly skilled jobs. That growth has resulted in over 2,000 new tech companies being created in Waterloo region, generating over \$20 billion in revenue each year. That's an awful lot of jobs in a short amount of time.

One such investment is at Sandvine. I was happy to welcome the Premier to Kitchener-Waterloo last week to announce a \$15-million investment into Sandvine to support further research and innovation. This grant is going to allow them to create 75 new jobs, added to the 267 they already have. These are high-paying, highly skilled jobs.

Mr. Speaker, Sandvine operates in a fiercely competitive global market and is now performing leading-edge work in cloud computing.

You see this around the world—in Silicon Valley, in Israel, in Germany: governments that are investing in the tech sector.

By our investing in our tech leaders in my community—this is precisely why we've been able to prosper in Kitchener-Waterloo. We call these the fast runners. I am proud of them and proud of the investments that we are making.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TOMATO ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA CULTURE DE LA TOMATE

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 179, An Act to proclaim Tomato Day and to make tomatoes the official vegetable of Ontario / Projet de loi 179, Loi proclamant le Jour de la tomate et adoptant la tomate comme légume officiel de l'Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Heckling during introduction of bills?

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I thought so. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do my job properly.

The member for a short statement.

Mr. Mike Colle: I never knew it would be so controversial.

If passed, this bill would proclaim July 15 of every year as Tomato Day in Ontario and would also proclaim the tomato as the official vegetable of the province of Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise to remind my colleagues that today, March 21, is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

1320

I have spoken on this issue in the past, and this year is especially significant for a number of reasons. Mr.

Speaker, 2016 marks 50 years since the United Nations General Assembly first proclaimed the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to commemorate the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, a terrible day when 69 people were killed in South Africa after police opened fire on a peaceful demonstration against apartheid. It marks 15 years since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, a comprehensive framework representing the firm commitment of the international community to fighting racism and related forms of intolerance and discrimination worldwide.

In Ontario, we are shaped by diversity and distinct cultures. Ontarians embrace the wonderful diversity of race, culture and religion we have here today. Since 1962, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the first in Canada, has prohibited discrimination on several grounds, including race. These are strengths that we have built on in our province to continue to build a fair society.

My own parents arrived here when I was just a child, and they were drawn, like countless others from all over the world, by Ontario's promise of opportunity and cultural pluralism. But we know there is much more work to be done to fight racism, not just internationally but here in Ontario and across this country.

Many people in Ontario continue to face racism: people who are indigenous to this land, people of all races, ethnicities, creeds and cultures who are newcomers to this country or who have called Ontario home for their entire lives and who, every day, come up against economic and social barriers, including in education, the justice system, and the workplace. Over the years, there have been many advances towards a more equitable society, but we all know there is more work to be done.

We are committed to building Ontario up. We are committed to building infrastructure and creating jobs and growth. We are committed to investing in education, social services and poverty reduction. And we are committed to enabling more people to contribute to their economy and to helping every person in Ontario reach their full potential.

But we will not succeed on any of those fronts unless we bring down the barriers that create unfair outcomes, because strengthening our province includes a commitment to achieving real social justice and equity. It includes making Ontario a place where everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and prosper.

We won't be able to achieve those goals without taking real, proactive action to address racial discrimination and inequity. It starts by acknowledging that racism does create barriers, and by understanding the experience of racialized people. From acknowledgement and real understanding, we can move to action.

Last month, I joined the Premier as we announced the establishment of the new Anti-Racism Directorate. The directorate will take an evidence-based approach to solving problems. In the coming months, I'm committed to engagement and collaboration with experts, key partners and those who have experienced racism to better inform our work.

As part of this directorate, I've already had the opportunity to meet with many community partners, including Colour of Poverty and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, to talk about issues related to race and how together we can make progress towards eliminating these issues. Every aspect of the directorate's work will reflect what the community sees as important. I think the people of Ontario and the people of this Legislature believe that this work is important. At every stage of the directorate, we will work to make sure our partnerships are transparent and accountable and that we build those principles necessary for continued change.

Our government is committed to addressing racism in all forms, including individual and cultural racism. We know that it's at the systemic level that government can be most effective by playing a lead role to eliminate racism. That real change will depend on partnerships with those who have the experience and expertise to get results.

We have a lot of work in front of us, but I know we can continue to build this great province. I know that our government and the people of Ontario are up to the challenge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. I just ran back from Elm Street. The YWCA is hosting an anti-poverty forum today, on the international day for the elimination of discrimination, about how it all ties in.

All these community groups that were there were networking. It was a very positive vibe. I think everybody understands that hate is now illegal, that discrimination is illegal, but that there are challenges that we have to address.

I'm reminded of how kids went to school and were taught the dangers of smoking. They went back home, Mr. Speaker, and they said to their parents, "You shouldn't smoke." I think that that's what we need to do. We need to reach out to the communities and focus on the children, but not just the children. We need to get the children to come home and feel confident enough and empowered enough to say to their families, "This is not right. The way you are behaving is not right," and to change that way of thinking, to focus on a better and more positive and a more inclusive community. It starts with one child and it grows from there.

We need to look at it as a puzzle. Having an antiracism secretariat is just one piece of the puzzle. We need to do a lot more. We need to network so that all those puzzle pieces can come together so that it can work.

I want to mention today something that I'm a very big fan of, and that's the Tour for Humanity. I think many of you have heard of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies. They really put their heads together and they created this incredible mobile classroom. With more than 10,000 students visiting their Koffler centre, they said, "We have challenges because

not everybody can come to us. How are we going to get to the communities?" It's easier said than done, but they were able to create a 30-seat, wheelchair-accessible, state-of-the-art, technically advanced classroom that presents information on the effects and consequences of hate and intolerance. They travel throughout the province, educating people from different personal and professional backgrounds and experiences, and provide education on historic events, focusing on how the events are relevant to both Canadian and global perspectives. The purpose is to inspire all of us, of all ages and backgrounds, and empower us to raise our voices and to take action against hate and intolerance. This all began just in 2009, which wasn't very long ago.

I think that we need to have more innovative means of addressing how our different communities interact with each other and how we are going to make Ontario be a world leader in anti-poverty and anti-discrimination. I think that with all the technology out there, which we often hear about here in the Legislature—with all the technology out there, there can be far more that we can do. I know that everybody's talking now about how the Amber Alerts aren't using proper technology. We need to address racism and poverty and community groups and health care. We have all this technology at our fingertips and we're just not utilizing it to the best of our ability.

I saw something just yesterday that was posted online. That was the report by the Toronto police department on hate/bias occurrences by victimized group. The numbers look quite small, and I think that in some major cities in the US they wouldn't think that it was necessarily possible to have low numbers. But there's still too much hate crime being committed and probably not very much being reported. In order of the groups most targeted for hate, the Jewish community, unfortunately, was first, LGBTQ, followed by the Muslim community and—they were really quite close—the black community as well, and then different communities where it's a multi-bias, and they can't really necessarily say that it's targeting one community or the other.

1330

I really hope that the anti-racism panel is going to bring in all the community groups I mentioned previously, that are meeting right now at the anti-poverty forum, to consult with them and have them on the panel so that much more can be done and so that it doesn't just turn out to be more photo ops; and that we actually accomplish something and don't have to keep having these discussions year after year, and we can stop having the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and focus on tomatoes, as the member just promoted.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, we know we need to fight racism everywhere, every day, but every year on March 21 we mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and all eyes should be on the issue.

Today, I am participating in the Racism Free Ontario forum here in Toronto, which that brings together indi-

viduals and organizations from across the province with the singular goal of eliminating racism. I want to give thanks to and recognize organizations like Colour of Poverty–Colour of Change and the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, who are leading the efforts to ensure that Ontario achieves the goal of becoming a racist-free province.

Today, four key elements will be focused on, including employment, education, justice and health care, along with the newly announced Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. When we look at these key areas, it becomes easy to see why they need our attention.

Take employment, for example: On Thursday of last week, the Toronto Star published an article by Nicholas Keung, their immigration reporter, titled "Jobseekers Resort to 'Resumé Whitening' to Get a Foot in the Door, Study Shows." Keung reported, "According to a two-year study led by University of Toronto researchers, as many as 40% of minority jobseekers 'whiten' their resumés by adopting anglicized names and downplaying experience with racial groups to bypass biased screeners and just get their foot in the door....

"In the study, only 10% of black job applicants—created by researchers based on real candidate profiles—received callbacks for job interviews if they stuck to their African names and experience with black organizations. However, the callback rate went up to 25.5% if their names were 'whitened' and their black experience was removed from their resumés."

Education research shows that there is an obvious gap for people of colour. Unequal Access, a report prepared for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, noted that the high school non-completion rate is highest among aboriginal youth, compared to visible minority and nonracialized youth. Among Canadian-born youth aged 15 to 19 in 1996, about three in 10 aboriginal youth did not finish high school and were not attending school in the past year, compared to less than one in 10 among visible minorities. Further, it was proven that when racial minorities have attained a university-level education, they are still less likely than non-racialized groups to be in the top income quintile. About 38% of the Canadianborn non-racialized group with a university education were in the top income quintile, compared to 29% of Canadian-born visible minorities and 21% of foreignborn visible minorities.

In health care, racial inequality is most often indirect and systemic. From the under-representation of racialized groups in the medical profession to the delivery of culturally sensitive care, the challenges experienced by racialized groups are disheartening. We must also factor in the impacts of socio-economic status in health care. A statistic generated by the advisory committee on population health showed that when questioned about their health, only 47% of Canadians in the lowest income bracket rated their health as very good or excellent, compared to 73% of Canadians in the highest income group.

The stats from the justice community are even less hopeful. Right here in Ontario, the question of carding is still unanswered, despite the practice being banned as it disproportionately affects black and brown men. To those who have not experienced racial profiling or do not know someone who has, it may seem to be nothing more than a mere inconvenience. However, racial profiling is much more than that. It is much more than a hassle or an annoyance. It is real. It is having real, direct consequences. Those who experience profiling pay the price emotionally, psychologically, mentally and, in some cases, even financially and physically.

We know that we still have much work ahead of us in Ontario to combat racism, and the newly announced Anti-Racism Directorate is most welcome. However, more important than the existence of the directorate will be funding it appropriately and giving it a mandate that will actually accomplish our common goal of creating a province free from racism so that every Ontarian can live with respect and dignity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current government under Premier Kathleen Wynne is calling for the sale of up to 60% of Hydro One shares into private ownership; and

"Whereas the decision to sell the public utility was made without any public input and the deal will continue to be done in complete secrecy; and

"Whereas the loss of majority ownership in Hydro One will force ratepayers to accept whatever changes the new owners decide, such as higher rates; and

"Whereas electricity rates are already sky-high and hurting family budgets as well as businesses; and

"Whereas ratepayers will never again have independent investigations of consumer complaints, such as the Ontario Ombudsman's damning report on failed billing; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario are the true owners of Hydro One and they do not believe the fire sale of Hydro One is in their best interest;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To protect Ontario ratepayers by stopping the sale of Hydro One."

I fully support it, will sign my name and send it with page Sabrina.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, if you would indulge me for one minute, I'd like to introduce my guests from Welland who are here for the reading of the petition.

They were stuck in an elevator with me before question period and I was unable to introduce them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You now are standing on a point of order, correct?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I am.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you. Roscoe Reilly, Ron Walker, Wendy Brown, William Barnes, Kevin and Fleurette Gruhl, Tess Sotirakos, Sue Hotte, Don Huneault, Henry Miron and Larry Rosnick: Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order, but I'm glad you introduced your guests.

Now it's time for petitions.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. These guests actually brought these petitions today.

A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the decision to close the Welland general hospital was made without consultation with the residents of south Niagara, and without regard for potential social and economic impacts of this closure; and

"Whereas the Smith report and recommendations to the government contained no evidence to support the closure of the Welland general hospital; no needs assessment for the residents of south Niagara; no costing of the entire restructuring plan; and no due diligence to mitigate the impact of poorer access to hospital care and services; and

"Whereas the catchment area of the Welland general hospital includes four municipalities, with a population of over 90,000, including a high percentage (+25%) of seniors and people living in poverty;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Stop the planned closure of the Welland general hospital;

"(2) Conduct a proper third-party evidence-based study to assess the present and projected health care and hospital services requirements of residents in the catchment area of the Welland general hospital;

"(3) Hold public consultations, not only during the assessment process, but also on the draft recommendations."

I support these 20,000 signatures, I affix mine, and I will send it with page Ariel.

CAREGIVERS

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are over 2.6 million caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour in Ontario;

"Whereas these caregivers work hard to provide care to those that are most in need even though their efforts are often overlooked;

"Whereas one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago;

"Whereas without these caregivers, the health care system and patients would greatly suffer in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP Gélinas's bill to proclaim the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day to increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers in Ontario."

I support the petition. I will give my petition to page Terry.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition as well to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the price of electricity has skyrocketed under the Ontario Liberal government;

1340

21 MARS 2016

"Whereas ever-higher hydro bills are a huge concern for everyone in the province, especially seniors and others on fixed incomes, who can't afford to pay more;

"Whereas Ontario's businesses say high electricity costs are making them uncompetitive, and have contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs;

"Whereas the recent Auditor General's report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years if nothing changes:

"Whereas the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss, the debt retirement charge, the global adjustment and smart meters that haven't met their conservation targets have all put upward pressure on hydro bills;

"Whereas the sale of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and will likely only lead to even higher hydro bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To listen to Ontarians, reverse course on the Liberal government's current hydro policies and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills."

I support this petition and have also affixed my signature to it.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to thank Mrs. Nancy Shank from Val Caron and Mary-Catherine Tremblay from Hanmer, both from the Catholic Women's League, who collected the petition. It reads as follows:

"Whereas quality care for the 77,000 residents of long-term-care (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families:

"Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario's hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the" province and the province "does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes....;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day...;"

"(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard and tie public funding for homes to the provision of quality care...;"

They want "(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario long-term-care home mandatory;

"(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment....;" and

"(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds and alternative-level-of-care beds to end the downloading of hospital patients with complex medical conditions to long-term-care homes."

I want to thank them. I'll affix my name to it and ask Jack to bring it to the Clerk.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children:

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

Speaker, I agree with this petition. I affix my name to it and leave it with page Khushali.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas demonstration schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special ... needs:

"Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstration schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and the hiring of teaching staff;

"Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstration schools and other essential support services;

"Whereas freezing student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind; and

"Whereas the situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstration schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential."

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker. I'll affix my signature and send it down with Jerry to the table.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

"Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher copayments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

"Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

"Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the government's plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians."

I sign this petition on behalf of all Ontario seniors who are going to pay costly for this decision.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province; "Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

"Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment:

"Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and the province of Ontario."

It gives me great pleasure—and I agree with the petition—to sign my name and give it to page Diluk, please.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this petition and I will hand it to page Samantha.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Stop the Plan to Increase Senior Drug Costs.

"Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

"Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher copayments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

"Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

"Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and

should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"Stop the government's plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians."

I couldn't agree more with this petition. I affix my name to it and give it to page Terry to take to the table.

1350

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. When public education about sexual violence and harassment is not prioritized, myths and attitudes informed by misogyny become prevalent. This promotes rape culture.... Sexual violence and harassment survivors too often feel revictimized by the systems set in place to support them. The voices of survivors, in all their diversity, need to be amplified. Survivors too often face wait times for counselling services as our population grows and operating costs rise for sexual assault support services.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-

bly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the findings and recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment's final report, highlighting the need for inclusive and open dialogue to address misogyny and rape culture; educate about sexual violence and harassment to promote social change; fund sexual assault support services adequately to meet the demand for their counselling and public education programs; address systemic assumptions within the current ... aid structure to ensure survivors are supported and not revictimized; and address attrition rates within our justice system, including examining 'unfounded' cases, developing enhanced prosecution models and providing free legal advice to survivors."

I agree with this petition, will put my name to it and give it to Lauren.

GREEN POWER GENERATION

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario already overpays for wind and solar power supplied by the FIT and microFIT programs compared to other provinces, including Quebec; and

"Whereas many townships have declared themselves unwilling hosts for industrial wind turbine developments;

"Whereas the IESO has ignored municipalities' wishes and approved projects in unwilling host municipalities;

"Whereas the Auditor General identified that the global adjustment—the cost of overpaying for electricity

under the Green Energy Act—has cost Ontarians \$37 billion to date and will cost us another \$133 billion by 2032:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately impose a complete moratorium on all wind and solar project developments in unwilling host communities."

I agree with this and will be signing it off to Jack.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2016 ONTARIO BUDGET BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2016

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 9, 2016, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I always welcome the opportunity to say a few words about Ontario's fiscal situation, the state of our economy and, more specifically, budgetary measures that are before this Legislature.

There is concern out there, I would say, across the province. I can certainly speak for my riding. We've just come back from constituency week, so I had an opportunity to do some mainstreeting—quite a bit of mainstreeting, actually—and a lot of visiting in various towns in my riding. People are worried. A lot of it seemed to revolve around money. Now, granted, I was going in and out of businesses. There was a lot of concern. I think of a real estate broker who had been sitting in his office all day—not much business that day. But he still had to pay for his electricity.

Talking with steel fabricating—I was in and out of a couple of welding and fabricating businesses. They have a very good reputation. The stuff they do is amazing. The one shop had laid off a large percentage of their staff. The other shop—very small, family-run; both of them are family-run—would bring young people in, but they didn't have the skills. They had the schooling, they had the training, but they didn't seem to be up to speed and didn't seem to have the interest. In fact, he indicated that some of them were a safety concern. Again, that was hindering that particular shop from expanding right now.

I did have a great time door-knocking. I started in Port Dover and then up to Waterford, over to Caledonia, Simcoe several times—a larger town in my riding—and down to Dunnville, doing a lot of visiting. There is concern out there. There's anger. The anger is directed towards this government, by and large. I will say—and this is no surprise to many people; perhaps this is the nature when you have a party that has been in government for a large number of years, like the present govern-

ment—that much of the anger was very specifically directed towards the Premier.

I raised issues of what's going on here and raised issues of the budget that was presented a number of weeks ago. People didn't really have a lot of information about that, but they had a lot of information about their family, their neighbourhood, their town, and about the small businesses.

I did explain to people that, for whatever reason, this budget was brought down two months earlier. Maybe I'm not plugged in. I'm still not sure why it was brought down two months earlier. I really have no idea. Maybe during the two-minute responses we will hear the reason. But it was brought down two months earlier than normal, for whatever reason. The federal budget is coming down tomorrow. I find it unusual that a provincial, let alone a municipal, which you would never see, would bring down a budget before they knew what they were getting or the partnerships that were being negotiated at the provincial or the federal level. It's very, very unusual, and maybe we'll find out the reason why.

The result of bringing it down two months earlier: a lot of the numbers are missing. A lot of the answers are not there, the program details. Even though we've got a budget book—I don't have one at hand—with hundreds of pages, details are missing.

I personally feel that, at minimum, this budget should have waited at least until after the recommendations and the feedback from the pre-budget hearings had come in. Why do we have pre-budget hearings? This really flies in the face of any concept of citizen participation or public involvement in the affairs of the treasury. Why was this budget brought down before the report came in, the feedback came in?

I do sit on the finance committee, Speaker. We heard from hundreds of deputations in Hamilton, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa and Toronto. People came into those cities from so many areas across the province at their expense, presented written briefs as well, and put a lot of work into their presentations, but before our committee could report on what they had said, the budget came down. The cart was before the horse.

My constituency office down in Simcoe in the Haldimand–Norfolk riding, after the budget, and even before the budget, received a fair number of calls. People who are interested in the programs want to know when they start. We would contact the various ministries—as you would know, an MPP would have access to liaison people—but we couldn't get answers from the ministries. We were told, "Well, there's no details yet," or certainly no timelines yet. Whether that relates to bringing down a budget at least two months before you should have, I don't know.

I represent a farm riding, an agricultural riding. Half my residents don't live in town; they don't live in a village. For farmers and small businesses, I think the reality is sinking in that there's a \$28-million cut to the budget for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. To me, this does not bode well for rural

Ontario, small-town Ontario, and parts of our economy, including much of the city of Toronto, that have an economy dependent on agri-business and food.

1400

There's no doubt that we're going to see further details on these program cuts. Very recently, we came to realize that the Rural Economic Development Fund—the RED fund—is on the chopping block. I forget the terminology that's being used; it's being transferred. It's being yanked out of agriculture, anyway.

I do recall, a number of years ago, as a former government member, that I sat on the Premier's Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal. We travelled the province; we conducted our own hearings for months and months. We travelled elsewhere—Saskatchewan and the states of Iowa and Illinois—taking a look at some of the best practices. We got out to Sydney, Nova Scotia, an area that, at that time, was just losing its coal and steel industry—a devastating effect. It was explained to us that in Sydney, Nova Scotia, everybody pulled together to try and deal with this devastating hit to a rural economy.

As far as the OMAFRA budget: Again, questions are being asked by farmers: "What is getting the knife specifically?"

I'd like to quote the CEO of Food and Beverage Ontario, Norm Beal:

"The lower Canadian dollar has had an impact on our ability to generate jobs over the last few years, and we're expecting that to accelerate. We are launching a major campaign called Taste Your Future because there aren't enough people trained in our industry to take these jobs. We need young people and new Canadians interested in our sector for jobs ranging from millwrights to food scientists and marketing people."

Last week, I did hear this: the concern of wanting to hire young people, wanting to expand a bit but not being able to find the skills or the kind of training that would be suitable for their place of employment, whether it was a very small steel fabricating shop or a very large steel industry.

Going back to Beal's numbers: He indicated that the food and beverage sector has 132,000 direct jobs and another 172,000 indirect, full-time positions. He puts it out as the largest manufacturing sector in Ontario—larger than auto—a sector that generates \$40.7 billion in revenue.

A ministry like the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is a very important ministry, not only for farming but for the food and beverage sector. I've just explained the significance of that sector in our economy. The concern is with the cuts to the ag budget, a ministry that is one of the smallest ministries in the province of Ontario. So there is concern on that front.

The recession in 2008: Ontario was hit, partly because of our dependence on auto. But at that time, the food and beverage sector continued to grow, and it grew 11% from 2007 to 2012. During these continued dismal times in the province of Ontario, and in spite of that, the ag sector—the food sector—continues to essentially operate in not

only a steady state but to grow, and this is positive. I would think that that is something we could capitalize on. To get into that debate of winners and losers, I know that this government does pick and choose, company by company, which is a bad idea, rather than sector by sector. Sometimes they pick winners; sometimes they pick losers. At the end of the day, we're just not sure how effective those kinds of company-by-company grants are and what is the positive impact, if any.

City of Toronto: second only to Chicago as a food processing hub in North America. But we've also got close to the highest electricity rates in North America. We have the highest debt load of any sub-sovereign jurisdiction on this planet, the highest subnational debt in the world. The Fraser Institute put out figures that Ontario has the second-highest combined provincial and federal personal income tax rates in the G7.

So just in context, a province with the second-largest food and beverage manufacturing sector on the continent, something to celebrate, something to be proud of—but again, how can we continue to maintain that, given the fiscal decisions that are being made within this province, most specifically and recently with the budget that's before us now for debate?

To get even more specific, in light of all this, where did the decision come from to cut the ag budget by \$28 million? What ag minister would stand up and be proud of the fact that he cut his own budget by \$28 million? Maybe the decision did not lie with the present Minister of Agriculture. The rumors are out there—the cut, the transfer, the elimination of the RED fund, the Rural Economic Development Fund. Again, why would we do this? Is there not confidence in our food and beverage sector, our agribusiness sector? The food sector alone purchases 65% of food-related farm production from growers in the province.

Just to reiterate, the ag budget is dropping to \$916 million from \$943 million. It is one of the smallest ministries. How do you measure that? Well, one measure is the elimination of the Local Food Fund. We heard so much about local food from the government members across the way. The Local Food Fund is being wrapped up. I raised this in question period. I was told, "Well, it's kind of being transferred"—I assume what's left of it, if there is any money left—"to the Greenbelt Fund." I'm not sure how that helps Windsor or Thunder Bay or Essex county. My riding is not in the greenbelt. Sault Ste. Marie, Huron county, Leeds—Grenville—there is so much of the province of Ontario that is outside of the green belt. There's no money for them but this Local Food Fund.

On the environmental front, OMAFRA won't be seeing any of the Green Investment Fund initiatives in this budget. Five or six other ministries will be. I remain firmly convinced, in the recognition that the climate is changing, that agriculture does have the answer, one of the significant answers for the sequestration of carbon dioxide. I'm not worried about carbon; people talk about carbon taxes. It's carbon dioxide; let's talk about carbon

dioxide. Forestry: There's tremendous potential within our forestry industry to sequester carbon dioxide.

There's another sore point that I did come across in my travels last week. The Ontario pension: Just to stay with the ag line here, farm operations, those that are incorporated, will have to pay both the employer and the employee portion of this proposed Ontario pension. It's a payroll tax. That's nearly 4%.

Certainly people across the north, across rural Ontario, farmers in particular, will be hit by the climate change cap-and-trade fuel taxes. We already have carbon taxes, essentially, on fuel now. They're called excise taxes; they're called road taxes; they're called the HST. When you put a litre of gas in your car, of the price you pay, 41% of that price is tax. That's like a sin tax, in a sense. Now, it's not as high as tobacco—that's close to 80%—although a very large percentage of people do not pay that tax; they go into the black market.

Again, there's a 41% tax on fuel already, and really no bone thrown to agri-business. Fuel is a significant cost of not only putting in a crop and working up ground, but also harvesting, trucking and getting it to market. And for natural gas, again, no mention of assistance for a request for rural, small-town natural gas expansion, other than expanding the tax on natural gas.

I did hear about the concern from small business. It's a combination of electricity prices and increases in payroll taxes—in this case, for the Ontario pension. By extension, I was told they're just not sure, especially the smaller ones, how long they could continue. Will we see more doors closed? More job losses?

These are the people that are here now, running the businesses. What about those industries that might take a look at Ontario—or in this case, maybe they're taking a second look. Then if they take a third look, they realize the "made in Ontario" cost of doing business—they see the climbing cost of electricity alone; I hear this on the shop floor.

Going back to that Ontario pension: Of course, helping people save for retirement is a noble goal, but like everything this government gets involved in, they just don't seem to be able to get it right. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce would concur with that; 150 member businesses remain concerned that the Ontario pension payroll tax will erode the competitiveness of business. It will reduce the take-home pay of workers and, in their estimate, eliminate something like 54,000 jobs a year.

Couple that with the high price of electricity—again, there is a subsidy grant for those people who are willing to run their car with electricity, but there's no grant for those people who can barely afford to run their house on electricity, let alone heat their house on electricity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House. Today I'll comment on the budget motion, as well as the remarks from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

He concentrated on agriculture, which is important in his riding. Agriculture is very important in my riding as well. Yes, there's a cut in the agriculture budget, which is perplexing to say the least, because agriculture does hold one of the keys to carbon sequestration. But what's perplexing is the cut, and some of the places where the cut is happening.

This province used to have two pasture management specialists. What they do is advise farmers on how to grow pasture, how to grow a crop that can graze ruminants, can graze animals. That's very important, because as agriculture progresses, we have to realize that we need more pasture, more grass to actually sequester carbon, so we don't have a monoculture. That's really important. A way to do that is to have someone who knows what they're doing, like pasture management specialists, of which we had two.

The province is so worried about greenhouse gases, and what's their response on small things like a pasture management specialist? "Well, one will do." One will do across this wide province? We talk about developing agriculture in northern Ontario; the conditions in northern Ontario are much different than southern Ontario. Perhaps the pasture would also be different.

Again, people who don't know anything about farming might think a pasture is basically a lawn: "Why do you need a specialist for a lawn?" But it isn't. Pasture management is one of the keys to carbon sequestration, yet this government is cutting instead of building.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: I want to make three points in my two minutes.

One is that the question has come up: Why was the budget introduced earlier? The answer to that is two things. One is that we are living in uncertain times. Ontarians feel that; we all feel that. We detected a concern and a need to know as early as possible what the plan for the Ontario economy was. Secondly, the capand-trade which we had announced needed the details released as early as possible so that they could participate in the 2017 carbon auction. So for those two reasons, among others, the budget was introduced earlier.

Two other points that I want to make about the budget. One is that there has been this criticism that there wasn't consultation. In fact, there were 20 in-person pre-budget consultation sessions conducted in 13 cities in Ontario—more than 700 people. There were two telephone town halls that reached more than 52,000 Ontarians. There were 500 written submissions. There were numerous online consultations, with more than 6,500 users, through the Budget Talks website.

Last, and in many ways not least, I want to speak to one item in the budget, and that is that, effectively, students from families with an income of \$50,000 or less are going to receive free university tuition. We are untapping a huge pool of talent which, if properly trained and educated, will serve this province well. It is now both the hope for that community and also the means for that

community to achieve a university or college education. That is one of the best news items in this budget. It's good for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to stand and add to the communications on Bill 173, Jobs for Today and Tomorrow. It should actually be named, or renamed, I suggest, something along the lines of "no jobs for today and tomorrow."

You take look at it, and big businesses are leaving Ontario right now. We've got hydro rates that are going through the roof. Small businesses can't afford—owners of small businesses are working much longer and much harder.

Our wonderful member from Haldimand–Norfolk, in his 20-minute dissertation on this budget bill, talked about \$28 million that had been cut from the ag budget alone. Well, down in Chatham–Kent–Essex, my riding, there is some of the best agriculture land in Canada. We grow corn. We grow soybeans. We grow a fruit called tomatoes. However, we also grow over 500 industrial wind turbines, and you know what? It's been estimated that each one of these industrial wind turbines takes up at least three acres of land. Now, that's over 1,500 acres in the Chatham-Kent area alone which could have been used for prime agricultural development and yet has gone to these industrial wind turbines. No pun intended, but this government is blowing in the wind.

If you look at this even further, and one of the concerns I had—and we heard from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs talk about the number of consultations. Well, my concern is very simple, Speaker, and that is this: The number of consultations that were undertaken by the finance committee—they didn't even have a chance to finalize their report and submit it. It reminds me that this government just went ahead and created this budget. It's "Don't confuse me with facts. My mind is already made up."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, was pleased to listen to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk explain basically what it will mean to the people he represents. The first—and that is for his riding but applies to mine just as well—is the complete disregard for people's opinion, that you could have a finance committee which takes the time to travel with staff, with interpreters, with Hansard. All of those people travelled through the province so that people from Ontario could have a say into what the budget could look like. But all of this was pushed aside. The government was not interested in hearing what people had to say. They had already made up their minds. They knew better than the rest of us what was good for us.

This is insulting. It is disrespectful, and it has been noted. It has been noted in his riding, but it has been noted in my riding as well. Why did we bother? It was not easy in northern Ontario to participate in this. An

eight-hour drive to make it to the lonely northern sites where the finance committee came to, and all that for nothing, because what went on at the northern consultation came way after the budget had already been written, translated and put in print. This is not good, Speaker.

Another part that he talked about was how agriculture was going to be affected. In my riding of Nickel Belt—people may not think of Nickel Belt as agriculture, but there is a lot of agriculture going on. Most of them have taken a serious step back since the horse racing has been cancelled. The only place in Ontario where horse racing was cancelled was in the north, the one lonely track. Well, that affects all of my farmers in agriculture.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk can reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the feedback and the additional comments about the lack of public consultation. In a sense, we did have the public consultations through the all-party legislative committee, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. The consultation was done. It's brutal: It's a lot of travelling, a lot of stops and hundreds of deputations. The problem was that we were still writing our report and summarizing what people had told us they wanted to see in the budget well after the budget had been tabled. The cart was before the horse.

I'm not faulting the Legislature, because the consultation was done. The thing is, the budget was moved forward two months—stampeded through. We were given some reasons quite recently as to why this was done. One was to shove through the cap-and-trade gas tax, which would be on top of the 41% tax already on gasoline. That's getting up there. You can compare Ontario to many competing jurisdictions in the United States. I think any trucker could tell us about that.

What I heard—and this is again what I saw in my riding—is that life's getting tougher. People are being laid off, regrettably. There are challenges in hiring, because it seems our education system is still not up to snuff as far as the skilled trades. All we had asked was for three things: affordable energy, better management of our health care system and a credible plan not only to balance the books, but to start chipping away at the debt. We did not see that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is always my privilege to stand in this fine Legislature and speak on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa. Today I finally have the chance to speak about this Liberal government's budget. It is a beautifully titled budget. It's called Jobs for Today and Tomorrow, which is a very hopeful title. However, as I've learned sitting across from this Liberal government, the devil is in the details, and a pretty title does not a strong piece of legislation make.

If we were going to better name it, it might be fairer to say "hardly any jobs today and likely even fewer tomorrow"—and this is from me, and I'm an optimist. But with the way this government short-sightedly puts growth in the economy in its crosshairs, it is hard to be hopeful.

Let's talk about the budget. Let's first talk about how we got here. Since I'm still relatively new, Mr. Speaker, I still appreciate learning the process. I still appreciate understanding how Ontario's government works, or sometimes how it pretends to be working.

Back to the budget: I stand in this Legislature on a fairly frequent basis, and I give the government heck from time to time about not being accessible to all Ontarians. We point out when the government shuts down and rushes through debate, and when they spring big new bills on the rest of the Legislature and hope that we won't have enough time to inform or involve stakeholders. We see that this government's favourite toy is time allocation, which is speeding up the process and shutting down discussion. We know that this government hates to travel ideas and committees around to other parts of the province, like to my community of Oshawa. The Liberals are quick to point out that people in the north or rural communities can just as easily call in, that they don't need to have face-to-face submissions, but I don't think that's fair, nor do I think that is as effective as having a real person sit across from their representative government and look them in the eye. But from where I sit, that seems to be what this government wants to avoid: interacting with constituents and answering to them directly.

For the average piece of legislation, there doesn't seem to be the interest in travelling to different communities. With the budget, however, there wasn't really any way around it. The finance committee travelled to cities around the province and heard from many Ontarians.

I decided to sit in on pre-budget committee consultations in Hamilton. I heard from desperate Ontarians hoping that the government would address poverty and social systems. I heard from municipalities with specific requests. I heard from corrections officers imploring the government for necessary health and safety equipment and investment. I heard from Ontarians begging this Wynne government to stop the sell-off of Hydro One. I heard from people talking about our woefully underfunded health care system, and they shared very real examples of how bad things have gotten. Throughout the pre-budget consultations, there were countless submissions, written and in person. They were honest and they were raw and they deserved to be heard.

I don't envy anyone who makes decisions around the task of prioritizing such desperate and real needs, but that's the job. There must be careful, conscientious and responsible calculations and considerations when it comes to sorting through all of the needs and requests from across the province. Otherwise, why on earth bother with the committee process? If the decisions have already been made, then why go through the motions of collecting input from Ontarians?

I sat in for a day on committee. I watched the government members listen. I heard them asking questions for

clarification. I heard them thank each presenter. Then they spent the next week or two continuing to hear submissions. Research was compiling and organizing, summarizing and sorting the hundreds and hundreds of submissions.

I'll tell you what I think should have happened next: The committee should have presented its report to the Legislature. All of this information should have been taken under advisement, and then the budget should have been updated to reflect some of that input. However, Mr. Speaker, I'm learning that the process that should be often is not what happens when it comes to this Liberal government's interpretation of process.

You might recall that the budget was ready almost two months before it normally would be, and we keep hearing that again and again. So they were ahead of schedule. In fact, it was so rushed, Speaker, that the Premier has had to backtrack on details, likely because they were so hastily strung together that they can't even withstand

criticism—but more on that later.

As I was saying, this budget came out way ahead of schedule. Why? Why the rush? What's the hurry?

This budget is pretty important. It's the budget for the government of the province of Ontario. It matters. It has far-reaching implications. The ripple effects of these decisions will affect everyone across the province. So you would think that it would be worth taking the time to do it right.

The budget needed to be written. It needed to be signed off on, translated and then printed, and that takes a while. In fact, I would challenge this government to prove that the final budget wasn't actually in mid-process while they were sitting across from Ontarians who thought they were being listened to. I'm sure that they will feign indignation at the very thought, but we do know that the budget was signed, sealed and delivered before the committee even had finished its report. The voices from across Ontario had their say merely for show. Isn't that awful? And we wonder why people across Ontario are cynical.

So here is our rush budget. The government is so afraid—excuse me—is so fond of its stretch goals—I wish they were afraid of stretch goals—and this budget is another perfect example. It has got some shiny distractions but very little substance.

Unfortunately, it continues down the path of death by a thousand cuts. When it comes to the average Ontarian household, life is just going to be more challenging. In fact, this government is again missing every opportunity to commit to providing the basics that we need across the province, basics like health care, jobs and education. 1430

So let's talk about health care. There were rallies outside of every single pre-budget consultation around the province. Organizations and everyday Ontarians were demanding that this government stop slashing and laying waste to our public health care system. They were begging for this government to stop cutting health care. They were loud and clear about the many ways to strengthen services and health care for everyone.

On a side note, Mr. Speaker, this government has denied every day and in every way that they are even cutting services. They play word games and try to outclever Ontarians with their moving-target definition of "cuts." If it looks like a cut and it hurt likes a cut and it bleeds like a cut and it festers like a cut—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a cut.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —this government will play games and say "Nope, not a cut." In Lib-speak, they might be clever and call it—I don't know—a temporary skin displacement, or a division of dermal continuity. But, honestly, a cut is a cut is a cut.

Case in point: In Durham region, we were the guinea pig when it came to cutting rehabilitation services, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. Non-acute, non-high-risk clients were suddenly no longer able to get athome rehab services. When we did our digging—sure enough, no more services.

But fear not, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't a cut. It was a waiting list. Everyone who was eligible for services was now eligible to be on the shiny, newly created waiting list. Previously, they would have received services, but now, with new financial constraints, they were put on an indefinite wait-list, not cut. So, no services, but not cut. Just put in a box marked "If we win the lottery"—tantamount to a cut, but technically deemed wait-listed. Ta-dah. Liberal shenanigans. But I digress, Speaker.

Health care in Ontario is being attacked by this government, and I'd like to see them try to deny that fact. Let's talk about the new ways that's happening.

This budget nearly doubles the cost of prescription drugs for most seniors—doubles, for seniors—targeting seniors.

My grandma will be 95 on March 26, and that's no small feat. She still lives at home and is doing her best. She does need care at home. She needs access to affordable transportation. She needs me to visit more often. She would really appreciate a local grocery delivery service. What she doesn't need or deserve is for the government to pick her up and shake her to see if a few loonies fall out.

Making up the difference by fleecing our seniors is unconscionable. You want money coming in? Stop the sell-off of Hydro One, a revenue-generating asset. Stop scrounging in seniors' couch cushions and do something sustainable and think long-term.

Health care cannot be strengthened by a government that does not care about health, so I challenge them to actually care and want to make it better.

Speaker, I will fight for strong public services, and I will fight until the end for strong, properly funded public education. I came out of the classroom, and I maintain that education is the great equalizer. Every student deserves fair access to opportunity and a quality education. It galls me to no end that in this year alone, the government is slashing \$430 million from education.

Our kids deserve resourced classrooms and supported staff to facilitate their learning and growth. For perspective, in three years this government will have cut—

actually cut—\$1.1 billion out of education. Don't just think dollars; think supports, think services, think opportunities, and think the future.

Speaker, I've been mad at this government for a long time. In fact, it was the Liberals who wrecked so much, so fast, with Bill 115, and that's what inspired me to take action. So here I am, and while it feels good to have the opportunity to give them a piece of my mind from time to time—and I'm glad to be able to vote on the record against their short-sighted, damaging budget—it doesn't feel good to know that I can't stop them from pulling the rug out from under our kids.

They are hell-bent on underfunding and undermining our system and our students, but it's wrong. It is said that a penny saved is a penny earned, but what about a penny stolen? A penny stolen is one that could have been invested. Investing in our children and our students has value that none of us will ever be able to measure. But here we see, again, a government that is shortchanging their opportunities and potential. Shame on the minister and shame on the Premier.

Speaker, since we're talking about education, you have probably heard that this budget has been strategically marketed as the free-tuition budget, so let's discuss.

Personally, I know where I stand on education. Let's be clear: New Democrats support easier access to affordable education. Simplifying the student aid system sounds like a good thing. Student groups have been calling for change for years, and we support their work and their gains. But to call this free tuition isn't being entirely honest. Free-ish might be more clear. There are a lot of pieces that need to be addressed by this government so that students can budget and make plans. Professional program students don't know where they will stand. What is the cost, the real cost, of tuition? What does this government have to say about tuition caps? In the words of the government, the language around free tuition is "evolving." We hope that we all have a better understanding of what this government intends. We don't want it to be a clearish explanation when we finally get it. Students deserve to know how to plan for their futures.

So we know that free-ish tuition is stealing the headlines, but here is something the government isn't talking about when it comes to post-secondary education: On a per student basis, Ontario's universities receive the lowest level of public funding in all of Canada. Ontario has now ranked last on per student funding in Canada for six consecutive years. Also, tuition fees are the highest in Canada. So not only do we want students to have access to affordable education; we want them to know that it is quality education—quality education delivered by qualified and fairly compensated faculty. We want students to be able to afford a high-quality education.

You know what else, Mr. Speaker? We want them to graduate into a promising and optimistic employment landscape. But for 12 years straight, Ontario's youth unemployment rate has sat above the national rate. In Oshawa, as in Windsor, our youth unemployment rate is among the highest in the province and in the country.

Why don't we see anything addressing that in this rush budget?

What we do see in regard to jobs and the economy is the fact that the Liberals project that they will fail to meet last year's job creation goals by more than 60,000 jobs. So I just want to take a moment to point out that they can't even meet a target that they set. They made up the number, and they can't even reach it. So I guess we're back to stretch goals. But this government's inability to get it right or even rightish when it comes to job creation and employment has very real consequences in very real communities. Those 60,000 jobs would fill 10 GM centres; that's a lot of people with families and plans to make.

In 2015, Oshawa was among the top 10 cities with the highest unemployment rate in the country every single month except for one. Those are real people and real families that we are talking about. It was really, really disappointing that any attention to automotive in this budget was almost an afterthought. This budget laid out automotive as a bottom-rung priority, and we don't accept this. We need to see a comprehensive and properly designed manufacturing and automotive strategy that will strengthen opportunities in our communities. They're dropping the ball and, in the process, endangering our futures.

We know I wear a few hats in this role, one of which is the NDP critic for pensions. When our budgets were delivered to us in the Legislature on budget day, I immediately turned to the section on pensions. Ontarians are eagerly waiting to know the details of the ORPP as this government decides them. A bit of a background: Two thirds of Ontarians do not have a workplace pension. There is a savings crisis and we need to tackle it. New Democrats originally proposed a strong made-in-Ontario plan. Unfortunately, what we're seeing this government do is slowly but surely limit the potential for a strong pension plan.

To illustrate: Initially, the Liberals said it would be a plan modelled after the CPP and designed so it could eventually be incorporated into the CPP. There was talk of universality, and then they started to talk about ways to exclude people. Comparable plans went from defined benefit plans to—what we see them now trying to get away with as comparable, and therefore excluded—PRPPs, bank products similar to RRSPs that we've talked about in this Legislature that don't even exist yet. They went from everyone in to a plan that could exclude seasonal workers, contract workers and far too many precariously employed Ontarians.

We're going to have much more opportunity to debate and discuss the design of the ORPP, but here's what I wanted to highlight today. On page 151 of this budget, they have laid out a section called "Collaboration on a National Pension Solution." It says, "Ontario will work collaboratively and intensively with the federal government, provinces and territories to make progress on a CPP enhancement that addresses the needs of future retirees." Apparently, it's the province's view that "a

CPP enhancement must be timely and provide a level of adequacy and targeted coverage that is consistent with the ORPP." Hmm.

1440

So, again, this government's view is that a CPP enhancement must provide "targeted coverage that is consistent with the ORPP." Pardon? They started this ORPP journey by saying that the ORPP would be modelled after the CPP and be designed to be incorporated into the CPP. Now they're saying, in their view, that the CPP enhancement must provide "targeted coverage that is consistent with the ORPP." Now they're saying that the CPP enhancement should be modelled after the ORPP. They've switched.

I'd like to point out that CPP is a universal program for all—universal for all, not targeted. Targeted would indicate, again, that some will be excluded. For expansion to be targeted instead of universal, it would have to be designed differently, and creating a two-tiered CPP expansion is wrong and attacks one of Canada's universal cornerstones.

Speaker, I'm almost out of time, and there's so much more that is missing from this budget. This government loves to forget about farmers—as we've heard—about our northerners and anyone who needs affordable housing. The environment, too, has been laid out as a weak priority. In remarks from one of my colleagues earlier in debate, it was referred to as photo-op environmentalism. That stuck me because that's just so well phrased: photo-op environmentalism. We will see a five-cent increase in gasoline, but why won't we see that money go to green initiatives instead of into Liberal pockets? I guess for that to happen, they would have to want to make a difference, not just to make noise and not just make things worse.

To summarize: I do not support this government or its short-sighted, shallow, rush budget, quite simply because this government does not support our communities. It begs the question, Mr. Speaker: If they're not supporting our communities, who are they supporting?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, while I was speaking to my seniors last week, I did a little bit of homework and looked up, on the Statistics Canada website, the percentage of households by province in Canada who are spending more than 3% of their after-tax income on prescription drugs.

Even prior to this budget's enhancements to the Ontario drug benefit, Ontario is, by a very large margin, the most generous province in Canada. On average, only about 3.3% of households spent more than 3% of their after-tax income on prescription drugs versus the national average of 6.5%. Alberta—and these are numbers that predated the collapse in oil prices—was 5.2%; Quebec, 9.5%; British Columbia, 5.7%; and Atlantic Canada and all of the rest of the provinces were in the double digits.

Now, Speaker, this is a budget that supports seniors actively. Some 170,000 more low- and middle-income

seniors will pay no annual deductible for their drug program, down from a \$100 deductible. Beginning this August—August 1, 2016—the income thresholds to qualify for the low-income seniors' benefits are going to be raised by roughly a third for seniors and for senior couples, and that's consistent with the guaranteed annual income system income levels.

The shingles vaccine—something we see on television advertised on the American channels mostly; something really didn't exist until a few years ago—will be offered to Ontarians free of charge if you're between the ages of 65 and 70, which is that age span where people are the most likely to benefit from the vaccine.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to stand and make a few comments on the speech given by the member from Oshawa.

She spoke about poverty. Certainly, poverty is an issue that we have in Ontario. You know, Speaker, there are more people using food banks in my riding than there ever were. In fact, there are more couples using food banks. These are couples that each have a job but they haven't been able to keep up with their expenses at home, mostly due to the increase in hydro rates that has been going on for a number of years, mainly due to the fact that this government will not take the advice of many experts in the energy field and get rid of the Green Energy Act, which we've seen push hydro rates up to being unaffordable for many, many people in this province. They talk about more seniors getting drug benefits, but unfortunately, they can't keep up with their hydro costs either, so they are giving with one hand and taking more with the other.

Certainly, we do have a poverty issue in this province, and it's not being addressed the way it should be by this government. You cannot fool the people of Ontario into believing that they have it better than they did a few years ago, because they don't. It just costs more to live in this province and, unfortunately, this budget is going to make it more costly to live in this province.

It's been said many times that the government introduced the budget before the finance committee wrote their report. This is ridiculous. Why do we spend all this money sending these good folks around the province and then they write a budget before they even hear the report? It's just totally ridiculous.

I heard the ORPP mentioned—and I guess I'm out of time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I thought the member for Oshawa did a very good job in outlining what it means for the people she represents. Part of her speech that really resonated with me was her 95-year-old grandmother. As a 95-year-old, the opportunity to go back to work to increase your income is zero; let's face it. Those people live on whatever income they have. As the government continues to make life unaffordable for them.

they feel squeezed. They feel stressed. With no way of increasing their income, they see their expenses going up, and that can be very problematic. She used an expression that says, "Why are we shaking down our seniors to see if a few loonies and toonies will come out of their pockets?" This is exactly the way they feel. This is wrong.

When the Liberal government was in campaign mode, they talked about pharmacare. Everybody knows what pharmacare means. It means care based on need, not on ability to pay. It means drugs based on whether you need them or not, not on the ability to pay. This is what they talked about when they campaigned. They touted their Minister of Health as being the one who is leading the charge for pharmacare for the entire country. Come election time, come the budget, they go in the complete opposite direction, where they say, "Well, some of you will be covered." The number is clear: 170,000 people. They have repeated it 170,000 times. We all know it. What they don't talk about is that there will be one million seniors, like the MPP from Oshawa's grandmother, who will have to pay more. That's wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Je suis bien fière aujourd'hui de me lever et d'apporter ma voix aux commentaires qui ont été apportés par la députée d'Oshawa.

Par rapport à un fait très précis, du fait du manque de consultations, l'apport fait que le comité des finances n'a pas pris le temps d'écouter les gens. J'aimerais quand même souligner pour les gens qui écoutent, mais surtout pour les gens ici dans cette Chambre, quelques données.

I would like to share a few examples very precisely for the member for Oshawa regarding some of the aspects of where we consulted and heard what the people of Ontario had to say and how it actually materialized itself within our budget.

One aspect that I would like to share is in Hamilton, actually. We heard from a group, Bioindustrial Innovation—

Hon. James J. Bradley: I was there.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you to the great member from St. Catharines here. The \$3 million will help support Bioindustrial Innovation Canada. That's actually on page 10 of our budget.

1450

The other one that I feel very strongly about—and I'm sure a lot of us here in the House, and particularly everyone in Ontario—is the fact that in Hamilton, Ottawa, where I was actually standing, and Thunder Bay we heard the need to invest in pregnancy and infant loss. That's actually on page 115; a million dollars has been allocated in this budget.

In Toronto, we also heard from the Toronto Atmospheric Fund. We will be investing \$17 million—on page 30 in our budget.

Also, all throughout the province, through consultation, we heard of the need for social housing. I was very happy to hear our minister, I believe last week—\$178 million will be allocated.

Monsieur le Président, merci de m'avoir laissé la parole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Oshawa has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to be able to answer some of the questions and comments that we heard around the Legislature.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville: I think it's great that the member has recently been speaking to seniors. I think many of his colleagues should do that as well, and I suppose better late than never.

The member from Perth—Wellington: I appreciated his referring to food bank use and the challenges with expenses at home and, again, highlighting the challenges for seniors in our communities. When we're talking about drug benefits versus paying their hydro bill and their expenses, I think his comment was that the government gives with one hand and with the other takes away. And then after they've taken it away, they seem to give them a good smack with it, is how it appears.

The member from Nickel Belt: Thank you for your comments and reminding us what it means for real people. Yes, I have a personal example from my community and from my family, but we all do. We all know very real people who are "squeezed" and "stressed," as you put it. It's great to be able to have a conversation about pharmacare in the Legislature. I've been hoping to actually have a sizable one, not just a two-minute opportunity, and to talk about care based on needs and not just the ability to pay.

To the member from Ottawa-Orléans's comment about lack of consultations: In my remarks, I did highlight that I went to Hamilton. I was there, yes, just the one time. I'm glad that this was a piece of legislation that the government couldn't avoid travelling. But being able to say that all of those consultations, all of the presentations, actually had the same opportunity to make an impression and be considered when, as we know, the budget was mid-process and the final budget could have already been translated and printed as those people were giving those submissions—that's not right or fair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I've been watching the development of a series of policies that—sometimes we get caught up in looking at one budget. It's interesting to me, in the six years I've been an MPP, the incredible changes I've seen in my community; and I think for many of us here it's been similar.

I just want to start at the beginning of life. We now have birthing centres, which we just started. I was very fortunate to get one of those pilot projects in a low-income neighbourhood in my community. It's interesting to me to watch, in the year that that's been open, how much more control women have of their health and childbirth. Two of the large communities in that neighbourhood are indigenous communities. Seventh Genera-

tion Midwives Toronto operates out of there, as do a large number of Muslim women practitioners who are midwives. The cultural diversity in learning that is taking place between different types of approaches to midwifery is really a uniquely Canada experience. That was a major investment by this government into a more progressive approach.

I've also witnessed in the last six years, Mr. Speaker, early childhood education—K4, K5—in schools. We've had five years now of early childhood education in Ontario, and the results are astonishing. When you talk to teachers, when you talk to parents, when you look at the scores, those kids now in grades 3, 4 and 5 are doing extraordinarily well. The opportunities that I see for low-income families in Toronto Centre, as a result of kids who haven't even finished their elementary education, are extraordinary.

I also have a program, that many of us have, called Parents for Better Beginnings, which is another social policy of this government. I go and meet with them. They're mostly women. Some of them are from conflict zones where they've had family members shot in front of them. The kids have gone through terrible trauma. Many of them are trying to accommodate new cultures into their lives that are very different.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker—I made a mistake; I apologize—that I'm sharing my time with the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore and the member from Newmarket—Aurora. I apologize.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Aw.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, I screwed up. I make mistakes sometimes. I'm sure I'm the only one in the House who has ever made mistakes.

I've watched this Parents for Better Beginnings, and the interaction between that and early childhood education and the control that—these same women often were involved in the birthing centres. As kids get through elementary school—and the massive investments—I've got great new schools, like Nelson Mandela. The number of schools that have been repaired in my community is quite extraordinary, and I don't think it's different. The real estate in my community tends to be amongst the most expensive to repair, given downtown prices. It's one of the hardest places to site schools in Ontario.

Then they get into high school, and then what kicks in? Something that came out of low-income-neighbour-hood folks in Regent Park called Pathways to Education. This is a way that students in high school can accumulate savings and financial assistance to help them through all the costs of post-secondary education. It provides mentorship and assistance and has also seen our graduation rate now jump from the high 60s to the low 80s over the last few years. I have kids who would have never graduated from high school, who are graduating with money in the bank and a sense of self-confidence.

Then this budget added another layer onto progressive politics. You can believe me: I represent a lot of families for whom household income is under \$50,000. Unequivocally, university and college just became free for

them. I don't think there's any doubt about that. So when you think of all the people out there in my constituency, like across Ontario, this is a phenomenal change. I was out in my community last week, as many were, and this is all I heard about—just the simplicity of people understanding a simple number. Then at \$83,000, I think the most you pay is about 500 bucks, which is a pretty good deal

Quite frankly, if you go to George Brown or you go to Ryerson or you go to any of the universities—U of T in my part of town—they all have top-up programs that help students out with scholarships and stuff like that. So it's fairly easy for those folks to take what is an extremely low-cost education.

But this is progressive building.

Then my friend the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities—I had the great pleasure, under his leadership, of announcing our youth connections program. This is \$250 million that is targeted to kids who are having trouble participating in traditional school and education, and gets them connected.

I am seeing that program all across my community—Yonge Street Mission, dozens of organizations working with kids who are on the margins, pushing them back into the centre of opportunity again. It is a phenomenal transformation.

I listened to my friend the member for Oshawa and I don't know whether we live in the same province. I've lived in Manitoba; I've lived in Quebec. There is no place in Canada where that suite of support for children, from the point of birth with their mothers, through to getting an education for free—where anyone who is in the lower and middle end of income has more supports today in Ontario than just about anywhere else. I lived under NDP governments in Manitoba—some very good folks—but we never had this kind of range of services.

There's some income-testing here. People who make what most of us make in this House can afford to pay. I pay for my nephew, who is struggling. I pay for his tuition at George Brown and incented him to do that. His mom wasn't able to help out in the way that she wanted. We all help out in some ways. Today, I probably wouldn't have to do that, and I could make investments in other parts of his life.

1500

On the employment side, there's this idea that we don't support over here, which is revenue-neutral carbon pricing. Please explain: revenue-neutral to whom? To us, as the government? If you actually look at it, please find me a successful model. British Columbia is projecting a 32% increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

The party opposite has a little secret they don't want to share with us, Mr. Speaker. It's very hush-hush over there. They love to talk about carbon pricing but they won't tell you what the price is. We're telling you what the price is. It's set by a carbon market, on supply and demand; it will be about \$17. You'll know what it is at the pumps. The model that they're suggesting is that we have to vote on it in this House.

Speaker.

To meet the federal objective—which is 14% below 1990 levels, according to all the leading economists—if you use the BC model, which they're so enamoured with, it would be 160 bucks. Now, what is it in BC? It's been frozen since 2012, because if you don't have a cap-and-trade system, you're relying purely on price. They've frozen it because they didn't have the will to actually set the price high enough to deter greenhouse gas emission reductions. It's frozen until 2018.

So what are you going to do? A little transparency across the aisle would be nice. Are you going to vote through a \$160-a-tonne price? Because to get any reductions out of it, that's the kind of price you're going to need. Are you going to vote through a \$30-a-tonne price? That's still about twice of what we're proposing, but we have a capped decline rate of 4%.

And how are you going to help families who have no money? People on low income, unless you're going to write very big cheques, are not going to get any material amount of money to help them buy an electric vehicle or get a bus pass or a transit pass. We're providing that kind of direct assistance, much in the way that others did, Mr.

This budget proposes how that money will be spent. It has to be spent in measurable GHG emissions, and we have to report on that, and do that up front. This \$1.9 billion may sound like a lot of money until you realize that you have to help every Ontario family retrofit their home, buy a low-carbon vehicle, get low-carbon technology in their home and replace that fossil-fuel-intensive heating and cooling system. It's not revenue-neutral to most working middle-class families; it's pretty expensive for them.

The same philosophy that I just talked about that's giving all of these families a leg up: Pathways to Education, access at free or low cost to universities and colleges, birthing centres, and youth connections—\$259 million, giving young people the ability to get a job. That \$1.9 billion, when you retrofit every single building in Ontario—that will be one of the biggest job booms.

The other thing that's interesting is that as you insulate all those homes and you retrofit all those buildings, they become less expensive to operate, because you have a more affordable platform. You see that in Switzerland and you can see that in other jurisdictions that have done these kinds of programs, because a net-zero carbon household is one that's generally generating its own power. You can see in my friend the MPP from Barrie's town the amazing work done by Royalpark Homes, where they're selling houses with very low—or almost no—power or home heating bills. The Conservatives don't support that, Mr. Speaker. They can't even tell you what the price will be, never mind that it is not neutral to anyone.

Mr. Speaker, I will turn it over to my colleagues. Thank you for your patience in listening to me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak to the budget bill and to follow the

great comments that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change was sharing with the House.

Mr. Speaker, when I transitioned from municipal office to Queen's Park, I was very excited about the various initiatives this government was undertaking: the reversing of the download on municipalities, and the investments in education, in health care, and in public transit—those things that we very much needed. I'm very pleased to be able to support a budget that continues that work.

With the change from municipal politics to provincial government, my perspective has also broadened. Also, my own life circumstances of being a parent have caused my views to be broadened. So I'm very enthusiastic about some of the changes being made to education, from early childhood education to later on.

I have a young daughter. She benefited tremendously from full-day kindergarten. By the time she's going to post-secondary education, I imagine that the measures being put forward today aren't necessarily going to be of need to her and our family. But I think of the many other children that I see, the many youth that I see, who really struggle about what they're going to do after high school, because they don't see a path to post-secondary education, because the day-to-day struggles of life for them and their families are tremendous. When I can go out to those young people and tell them what the opportunities for free tuition for lower-income families are, I think that is a tremendous initiative that's going to help so many young people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat puzzled, because I have been following carefully, over the last number of years, what different parties at Queen's Park are promoting. I know that all parties were very concerned about ensuring that there was a good spectrum of care for children with special needs. This budget is proposing—I'm trying to find the specific number, Mr. Speaker—significant funding for children with autism and special needs—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It's \$333 million.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's \$333 million, Mr. Speaker. That is something that I know all sides of the House were calling for. It's a great day in Ontario when we can actually move forward on the recommendations of the select committee and provide those services.

Again, as a parent, I interact with a lot of other parents with children who have special needs in the school. I'm very heartened to see that for those families which have particular struggles, there's something in this budget for them to help them and their children to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that this government demonstrates the flexibility that is required to look at the way that we do programs for various issues—and we look, whether they're effective or not. When we see that there's a way that they could be made more effective, we enact that change.

So when I see the change in the way that some of the business grants are going to be handled, I think that is a great thing that is proposed in this budget that is going to help us target those resources, those sectors, those

industries and those businesses that will most benefit from that provincial assistance, so that we can continue having an innovative economy and create those jobs for the 21st century that are being created each and every day in Ontario.

I'm very pleased to see the improvements to health care that are being proposed: once again, a \$1-billion increase to funding the health care system, and specifically, also, \$345 million for hospital-based funding—very important for those hospitals in my community that my constituents depend on, like St. Joseph's hospital, Trillium and William Osler further in the north. All of these are important features in this budget.

Unfortunately, my parents passed away some time ago, but I do have very loving and wonderful in-laws, who are seniors. I can see the benefit of some of the programs that are being offered here—free shingles vaccine, which I know my mother-in-law is very interested in, and some of these other things that are very important for seniors in this province. We're building upon the supports that we provide for them.

All in all, for young people, for seniors, for businesses, for everyday Ontarians, I see much that is good in this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Newmarket—Aurora.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Have you got Michael Warren's column to read?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Yes, we'll read Michael Warren's column shortly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to be able to speak to Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act.

I just wanted to start off by saying that in my travels in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, I've had the opportunity to talk to a number of people, individuals, a number of businesses and a number of organizations, not only about the budget but about our economy in general.

I know that there was and is still, to some degree, a large amount of concern about the economy, primarily brought about by the fact that oil prices have collapsed and a number of Canadian provinces have been hit exceptionally hard by the collapse of those oil prices. You can't seem to pick up a newspaper today without reading about some economic malaise. But the story is better in Ontario than other provinces.

1510

I'm delighted that the budget came in when it did so we could dispel some of the negativity, some of the concerns that I think were invading our collective psyche, if you will, that everyone in my riding of Newmarket—Aurora—or a large number of people in my riding—were very concerned that Ontario was falling into the same economic issues that have impacted Alberta, Saskatchewan and others. Certainly, there have been challenges, but we, as has been proven and shown, are doing better than most. So I was glad to see the budget come in when it came in.

I know in my riding that we have rebounded from the downturn in auto parts manufacturing. We have moved

into high-tech auto parts manufacturing. We have also moved on to other types of manufacturing, whether it be aerospace or else—we've diversified, and our economy has come back to a large degree.

In being out in the community, whether it's at a birth-day party for a 90-year-old—as I was on Sunday; I had an absolutely delightful time—or talking with students at one of our many local high schools, I'm always asking people questions about their future and how they're feeling today. So I just wanted to make a few comments in terms of what's important to the people in Newmarket–Aurora in Bill 173. I'll tell you right off the bat that people are delighted that the deficit has been reduced to the level that it has been reduced to, and that the government is keeping its promise to drive that deficit to zero in the next budget. I think there were some skeptics out there, but I think we're doing better than where we said we were going to be. The public has noticed that and are quite delighted about it.

One of the other things that has been well received in the riding of Newmarket–Aurora is the tuition changes and the fact that average college and university students with family incomes of \$50,000 or less will be able to graduate with no provincial debt. I think the most important thing about that is the fact that it has opened up opportunity for a wide range of students in my community who otherwise wouldn't even have considered going to college or university. They can now consider it, and I think that in itself is one of the most important things that we could do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Very quickly, Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act, should actually be called, "No jobs for today and let's hope for the best in the future."

First of all, I want to start with the positive. The positive is this: I saw more money put in for hospices, and I want to congratulate the government. I know it's an oddity, a rarity, for a member from the official opposition to compliment the government on that. But I will say this: that in Chatham-Kent, the grand opening for their hospice is on April 5, and the grand opening for the Leamington hospice is on April 6. But that was long before this budget was put in place.

Now, let's talk about the budget itself. When I look at the budget and I say to myself, listening to individuals— *Interjections*.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I know. They're a little bit distracting—Norm.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to call the House to order to allow the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex to make his points.

The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Speaker. No, he wasn't heckling; it's just that he's passionate.

When I look at the budget and I look at the hospices, that's a good thing. But then I heard the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore talk about the free tuition. We're

all for education, on this side, but you know, they say the devil's in the details. Of course, the Premier this morning was challenged in question period about her comment about free tuition. Well, then, what I meant to say was—I'm looking at it and I'm saying, "Hold on a minute. We did some calculations over here, and 30% of students may be eligible for that tuition."

You would say that's a positive, but here's the downside of that: We have a lot of businesses leaving the province, small businesses that are hurting. Why is that? Their criteria are that \$50,000 or less combined income will allow their children to have free education. Well, how sad is that, really, when a combined income is under \$50,000?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to respond to some of the remarks that were offered by the government members about their budget and to share some of the perspectives of the people that I represent in London.

Like all members in this chamber, last week I spent a meaningful time talking to constituents about some of the issues that they face. Quite frankly, Speaker, we have a crisis in health care in my community. One only has to look at the media stories that were reported last week during March break.

We heard about a 10-month-old baby who went in for routine surgery at London Health Sciences Centre. We all know about the March break slowdown in the surgery schedules. The hospitals can't afford to have staff there because they are trying to work with a budget that won't allow them to run their operating rooms. This 10-month-old baby was made to wait in the hospital for two days without being fed—with no food. She was gnawing at her hands and she was crying with hunger because the hospital could not accommodate her in the surgery room.

The London Health Coalition held a town hall in London and pointed to the crisis in London's health care system. We heard about the bottleneck in discharging patients with serious mental health issues because there is no supportive housing or affordable housing in the community. As a result, people are coming into emergency and being forced to wait in the emergency room and to sleep on the floor for days and days before they can access health care.

Speaker, the 1% increase in operating budgets for hospitals in this province is going to do nothing to address these very real concerns in my community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: J'aimerais débuter en souhaitant à tous les Francos et Franco-Ontariens et francophiles une bonne journée, la Journée internationale de la Francophonie qu'on célébrait hier, le 20 mars. Je sais qu'à travers la province cette semaine on célèbre la Francophonie. J'aimerais juste utiliser un petit peu de mon temps pour parler de ça et pour souhaiter bonne fête à tous les francophones et francophiles de l'Ontario.

Écoutez, je veux parler pour les gens de ma communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans puis apporter une voix francophone par rapport à des choses très spécifiques qui sont importantes de souligner. Le membre faisait référence au logement abordable, puis on vient d'annoncer 178 millions de dollars qui seront disponibles pour les gens à travers l'Ontario au niveau du logement abordable. On sait que c'est un enjeu important, et on l'a entendu tout au long des consultations publiques.

J'aimerais aussi parler un petit peu pour les aînés. On parle des aînés; on fait toujours des références aux aînés. Partant d'une expérience avec les aînés pendant 17 ans, je sais qu'une partie très importante, c'est le vaccin du zona. C'est quand même quelque chose de très significatif, et on va l'offrir gratuitement aux aînés de l'Ontario qui ont entre 65 et 70 ans. Ça, c'est une économie pour eux d'environ 170 \$.

J'aimerais aussi parler—on en entend un petit peu—des soins palliatifs. Mourir avec dignité, c'est quelque chose que le gouvernement et qu'on a entendu, encore une fois, durant toutes nos consultations. Nous allons investir 75 millions de dollars dans ce domaine-là.

Les stationnements : nous allons permettre des réductions allant jusqu'à 50 % au niveau des stationnements dans les hôpitaux pour les usagers fréquents.

Merci, monsieur le Président, encore une fois, de me laisser la parole.

1520

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We have said from day one that this government is not paying attention to the people of Ontario. They sent us on pre-budget consultations which were absolutely nothing more than a sham, according to this government, because while we were out having public consultations, on January 27 this government had already sent the budget to the translators. So it's pretty disingenuous for this government to stand here and tell us that they had any desire to listen to the people of Ontario when, indeed, not only did they not listen to us, they had already crafted the budget before we set out on our prebudget consultations.

Now, today, it is reported in the media that January 27 is the day that the government first sent the translators the documents, and this is long before—not only would they not have had a chance to process the pre-budget consultations; the pre-budget consultations were still ongoing. So how can this government ever stand here and tell us that they're open and transparent and they care about anything that the people of Ontario have to say when we have said, and are now proved correct yet again, Speaker, that this government sent their budget to the translators and to the printers? They sent it to the translators—we were still meeting in pre-budget consultations.

So never again will we trust a word that this government says. It's impossible to take anything they say seriously when they're caught yet again in another one of their schemes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments.

The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has two minutes to reply.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to touch on the issue of seniors. My mom-hi, mom; she's watching now so I'd better be well behaved—and my Aunt Anne have lived in several provinces. As my career has sort of gone around, my mom has come with me. I have this little five-foot-two Ukrainian dynamo of a mother in my life whom I admire greatly. It's interesting, because having lived in the Quebec and Manitoba health care systems, she's never had anything as positive an experience as here, including the drug plans. When we say that these things are more affordable in Ontario, in my family that has actually meant an extraordinary—and to see her wellness-I won't say her age because she'll get very upset at me. I'm 58, and I'll let the rest of it go to you. But she is extraordinary. It's phenomenal, in the drug plan and the changes and some of the amendments that are made, that she's now in the lower category. As she gets older, her income is more modest, but it's phenomenal to see the home supports, the improvements in PSWs. Could it be better? Yes, it always could, but I think you'd be challenged to find a place where it is healthier in Canada to be a senior where you have more choices than that.

I'm also saying that we've just governed through the worst recession in the last century almost and out of the collapse of banking. We bailed out the auto sector. One of the members said that the auto sector was on the lowest rungs. How many billions do you have to—I think it's \$6.8 billion to revive a sector that is making more automobiles and contributing more to our GDP than it ever has—more than saved it; it's exploding. Now we're making massive investments in electric vehicles and helping monitor that technology. Find a government somewhere in the world that has invested the way we have in the automobile sector, and will, as we move to that

I don't know what the NDP's standards are, but it must be free trade. We'll be back at balance next year, Mr. Speaker, which is a phenomenal accomplishment given the massive reinvestment—a phenomenal accomplishment. Best budget, toughest times—things are getting better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to speak to the budget.

I just want to start off by saying that I'm going to reiterate what, as I walked in—to think of the budget, to talk about the budget and what my expectation was. There were three things, similar to our party. (1) I wanted to include a credible plan to make energy affordable in Ontario; (2) to include a plan to properly manage Ontario's health care system to ensure that the services and programs are there when people need them; and (3) to include a credible plan to balance the budget, including immediate action to pay down the debt.

Instead, we received higher debt, higher interest payments and a rising cost of living. Life is harder for every Ontarian under the premiership of Kathleen Wynne and her Liberal government.

This is the ninth budget in a row that the Liberals have posted with a multi-billion-dollar debt—at \$308 billion, up from \$296 billion last year, a \$12-billion increase. This is the highest debt ever in the history of our great province. This translates into \$22,103 for every single Ontarian. When I look at these pages who have just joined us today-welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your experience. You are in debt \$22,103. A couple of my colleagues have become grandparents since we've been here. Their grandchildren start off in their life \$22,000 in debt. Anybody listening, anybody at home, anybody in this House who understands debt knows that once you get that far in debt, it's very, very difficult to come back out and actually have money to spend on the things you want, unless you can lower and get out of that debt hole.

It took the Liberal government 12 years to double the provincial debt. Under this tenure of the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals—12 years—they've actually doubled the provincial debt. None of the 23 Premiers prior to them did this.

Interest on the debt will be almost \$12 billion. That's six times more than what is spent on agriculture, the environment and natural resources combined.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read a list to you. The combined total expenses of the following ministries—aboriginal affairs, agriculture, Attorney General, citizenship, energy, environment, finance, francophone affairs, government and consumer services, labour, municipal affairs and housing, natural resources, northern development and mines, Treasury Board Secretariat, economic development, and tourism, culture and sport—would still not equal the amount paid to service the interest on the debt.

When I'm in my great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, or I'm out speaking to a group in the public, I ask them the question: "Can you tell me what the three biggest expenditures of the provincial government are?"

Typically, most people say health care, and they're bang on, as it should be. Health is the most important priority we all should treasure when we're here as legislators.

Number two is education. Again, everyone agrees with that; everyone concurs. It needs to be number two.

When I ask for number three, most people start to falter. They don't really want to answer or they don't know how to answer. Many will say community and social services, the most needy needing those services. No, Mr. Speaker. The third-largest expenditure by this Liberal government is actually payments of interest on the debt that they, and they alone, have accumulated—\$12 billion.

I talk about that a lot because really, in my job, every day that someone comes into my office, or I meet them on the street, or I'm out at a public event—I'm fortunate

enough to be out seeing a lot of people—what we have to talk about is what the realities of government are, what services we're not providing.

Almost every group that comes through, whether it's seniors on fixed income, whether it's people looking for children's services, like mental health or special needs, seniors who can't afford their hydro payments, when they come through my doors, what we talk about is where the money is going. They've had record revenues over the last number of years, this Liberal government, and yet they still add to our debt, add to our deficit.

With \$12 billion, we could fund a year of long-term care for 222,043 seniors. We could fund 44,120 beds in palliative care units for one year or 40,347 hospital beds for one year, yet we're hearing about hospitals being closed and beds being closed. We could fund 169,052,488 MRI scans.

Mr. Speaker, all of those things that I just told you, we're not getting. You know why? Because that money is going to pay interest on the debt that they've accumulated.

We all have limitations. We all have our own personal budgets, our family budgets, our home budgets, our business budgets. We all know it's fundamental that you have to be able to run your fiscal house if you're going to enjoy the things you really want in life. Speaker, the high debt payments are taking money out of public services.

Again, a few years ago, I was the community and social services critic. It was always appalling to me when I thought of the things—when people came through my doors, in their greatest need, looking for help for their loved ones; when they came through from Community Living; when they came through looking for affordable housing; when groups like the food banks and people like the United Way came through, asking to help those most in need in our society, yet I had to tell them that this government chose to spend money and to add to that burden of debt rather than services that we could be providing. I say to them, "What could we be doing in your backyard, in your service, in your association, if we had \$12 billion to the positive and not \$12 billion to the negative?"

1530

Community safety and correctional services: No funding was announced to support the recent PTSD legislation, Bill 163, and yet the government professes that they're going to fast-track and make this a priority. It's interesting that they say one thing, but where is the action to follow that up?

They continue to download court costs onto municipalities. There's no funding to assist police services when they're responding to calls where persons are in mental distress. That's becoming an increasing concern of municipal police forces that talk to me—and our OPP as well. There are a lot of people now calling for those services, and the police are dispatched, with no additional services, to actually come up and provide those types of specialized services.

Municipal affairs and housing: Not one Small Communities Fund grant was given to municipalities in my riding this year, despite, if you think about rural Ontario, the significant assets and the number of bridges. In my two ridings alone, we have 300-plus bridges that all have to be replaced and maintained, because we have to get the goods and services to market. Many of the natural resources come from our rural ridings—our food, the staple of everything we live on, which has to travel the highways, the bridges and all of that infrastructure that we have; the water, to ensure the safety of our residents; the sewer systems, again to ensure the safety of our residents—yet not one of those communities got it.

It cannot continue to fall on local municipalities to pick up the downloading because of their poor mismanagement. They cannot continue to fall back on property taxes, because we do not have the population bases to sustain such significant increases.

Mr. Speaker, on a very specific point, there was no money to boost things like the Wiarton-Georgian Bluffs airport. That's one of those things that is fundamental to an area like ours, to ensure the safety of our residents and the tourism industry.

Infrastructure and transportation services in rural and northern Ontario: I was pleased to see the Connecting Link Program revived for vital road and bridge improvements, but transportation continues to be non-existent in our small rural and northern communities. These communities continue to be shortchanged by this Liberal government, receiving \$5 million less than almost a decade ago—after the Liberals initially cancelled the Connecting Link Program in 2013—and receiving less than their fair share of the gas funds. Every year, I say in here, "Who spends more gas than you in your riding, travelling around?" Our farmers, our agricultural community, our small businesses need to be able to go those expansive distances to provide the services and programs, and yet we do not get our fair share of the gas tax funds.

Overall, the costs in almost all walks, in all industries, are increasing. Life is truly harder under Premier Wynne and her Liberal government.

Last week I was out in the community a lot, and I went into stores. I went into grocery stores. I went into M&Ms. I went into manufacturing businesses, production companies. The apple industry: I sat at a politicians' meeting, and I talked to someone from the apple industry and the horticultural industry. They had said to the government, "You're putting us out of business because of your increasing high hydro costs." They asked for some form of an industrial rate or a special rate.

Vic Fedeli, our critic from North Bay, Ontario, told the story—and he tells it often—that he was down visiting someone in Chatham-Kent-Essex. They were investing \$100 million in a new greenhouse. They were going to create 100 new jobs. Vic was ecstatic. He thought, "This is good. This is something I want to congratulate." Then the owner turned and said, "And I did it in the States, because you're uncompetitive because of the current way the government's going." Mr. Speaker, that's a sad story. We have the ability. We have the

workforce. We have a proud province that wants to lead our Confederation, but we need the government to turn tracks.

Drug deductibles for many seniors will nearly double to \$170 from \$100. A 4.3-cents-per-litre hike in gasoline taxes: Premier Wynne promised there would be no gas tax increase prior to the 2014 election. How quickly they change course.

A \$5-per-month increase in natural gas bills and propane: There's no guarantee it even goes to environmental needs. This is going to go to a slush fund to cover their mismanagement, their incompetence, their scandals and all of their overspending of the last number of years.

There's a 4.7-cents-per-litre increase in the diesel price, thanks to the direction that they're going in. Again, our small contractors, our large contractors, our farmers, our people out in rural Ontario who actually drive the economy through these—these are necessities, to have vehicles that are going to carry the goods and services to market, and they're going to pay significantly every time they stop to fill up at the pumps.

The sin taxes: Everybody knows that there's an increase in wine and cigarette prices and those taxes.

In agriculture, the apple industry: I asked this Liberal government in 2014 in this House to invest \$25 million over seven years to revitalize Ontario's apple industry. I'm told by the industry that they can totally revitalize the industry; they can ensure it's a thriving, sustainable industry; and they can provide all of the apples that we need in Ontario in-house, creating those jobs and creating the ripple effect to the economy, the positive economic impact, the direct and indirect jobs and the opportunity to ensure that this industry thrives. We now have cideries; it's a healthy food source. Yet I see nothing in the budget about that program.

Eight years ago, apple trees were being taken out of production in Ontario. Today our apple crop generates \$60 million in farmgate revenue, and there's lots of potential, we hear from the industry. The government is proud to say, "We're going to support this and we're going to support"—we just heard one of the ministers talk about supporting the car industry. Why will they not commit to the agricultural industry?

They often say that it's a priority ministry. Every other province—I believe every other province in Canada—has actually done an apple revitalization program, except Ontario. Why will we not watch and see the benefit that they're getting and do it here? I'm truly disappointed that the Minister of Agriculture did not facilitate the development of such a plan and champion Ontario's apple industry.

Instead, this government, which purports agriculture to be a priority, and that that's—in fact, the Premier at one time took this as part of her own personal portfolio. Yet they cut \$28 million from the agriculture and food budget and they increased costs across the agricultural community exponentially. This means less for farm families, less for rural communities, but more importantly, less for our province. Our food source is absolutely critical.

There was almost no mention of agriculture, other than a couple of niceties, but there was nothing there action-wise that actually gave our farmers hope. Many of the people in the meeting that I was at in Elmwood on Saturday morning—there were a lot of municipal politicians and commodity groups. You could see that they all felt the same: This is not a priority of this government, or you would not see—they had no hope that they were going to move forward.

When I was critic of community and social services, this Liberal government magically found \$50 million to cover overtime costs of a flawed SAMS program, and yet they cut \$28 million from agriculture, a supposed priority budget item for them.

We heard concerns at the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture meeting. Farmers are concerned about government rolling out policies without seeking proper scientific evidence, specifically the neonics and the pollinator health, and not consulting with industry stakeholders.

Rising electricity rates: They've added \$1,000 per year to the average family. Food producers need an agricultural and food electricity rate; greenhouses need industrial rates; and they have to stop the increasing regulatory burden.

Seniors in long-term care, which is close to my heart—that's what I'm currently critic of: I was pleased to see some money in there for palliative care. I was pleased to see some money for dementia and behavioural supports. On the other hand, I was very concerned about the impact overall to most of our seniors. Many of our seniors live on fixed incomes and in medically underserviced rural areas. Instead of ensuring seniors have better access to care and affordable medical drugs, this government is nearly doubling the cost of their prescriptions. Seniors will have to pay substantially more for their prescriptions. The deductible for the Ontario Drug Benefit Program for seniors goes up from its current level of \$100 to \$170. This reduced access to drugs will contribute to poor health over time and cause potentially much higher cost.

We hear from individuals saying, "I can't afford this. I'm making a choice. I'm not going to take my drugs or all of my drugs." Then they end up in the emergency department, which is the absolute most costly form of health care in our province. I just can't understand the rationale that they used here. It's, again, more of that spin, where they want to make it look good—"We're doing this"—but what they don't tell you is what they're taking out of the other pocket.

There's a crisis in long-term care in every corner of Ontario: 24,000 seniors currently sit on a wait-list for a nursing bed, a wait-list that we have been told by the industry will double to 50,000 seniors in just six years. The Ontario Long Term Care Association: I've met with them and I've been briefed by them. I want to understand the industry so we can try to be as supportive as we can. We have aging, crumbling long-term-care homes and 30,000 outdated nursing beds that need to be rebuilt to

safe, modern standards. I have been pressing the minister and the associate minister since I took on this portfolio to ask them—to just give me the answers. You committed, in two elections back to back—perhaps a third—that you're going to refurbish and redevelop 30,000 beds. I've asked them a simple question: Can you show me the plan of when and where those beds were planned to be developed? The silence is deafening—a total disrespect and disregard for seniors in our province. How could anyone on that side of the House stand there with any sense of pride and say that we have promised and committed to 30,000 beds and yet you cannot produce something as simple as the plan of when and where you're going to do them? Seniors' care is under threat of being rationed by this Liberal government, just as was done with cuts to physiotherapy services for seniors—again, they take away the services and they end up falling, getting more injured and they're back into a much longer, much more tenuous and much more expensive form of care.

1540

We are calling on the government to halt the drug cost increases. The Premier stood up and said that they may need to review that; that they may not have done the right thing. We implore them to actually reverse their decision that they put into this budget.

Safe staffing levels have been brought up by the Ontario Long Term Care Association and the Ontario Association of Not-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors. Both have called for safer staffing levels of care for the clinically complex seniors coming into long-term care homes. They're telling us that there are more complex needs, there are more challenges within the sector, and yet nothing is in there for increased staffing levels.

As many as 92% of Ontarians surveyed said that longterm care homes are not being staffed to meet the diverse and increasingly acute medical and mental care needs of our seniors. All they had to do was listen to the industry and to the stakeholders, and they could have made better decisions.

In my riding, I have a 100-year-old whom I went out and visited a few months ago. She was cut from three hours of care to two hours of care. I'm not certain who in this world can envision a 100-year-old needing less care as they get older, as opposed to more, with no rationale. Again, it's those types of things that I just can't fathom, and yet we see where some of the other money is wasted on things that actually are not front-line care and services.

There was no reference in the budget—and I would be remiss if I didn't ask the government—about the Markdale Hospital. They committed 10, 12, 14 years ago; they recommitted two years ago. It's not in the budget. I had a lot of calls saying, "Why isn't it in there?" There were a few other hospitals mentioned, so I'm going to put faith in this government. They committed, face to face, with the people in Markdale, and said, "We will build that hospital." I'm told by the executive of the hospital administration that it's moving forward, and I'm going to

hold them every day until I see the shovel in the ground and the first patient wheeled through the doors.

Compared to the last budget that saw another year of frozen hospital budgets, there were some increases, and that's good. But what they're doing is they're putting a bit of money in—\$107 million; that's a fairly significant amount—but what never gets talked about are those increasing energy and payroll costs. In Sault Ste. Marie, one of the hospitals there actually gave us figures that show that they're going to have a 25% increase in those two factors. So getting a little bit of funding—after a five-year freeze, by the way—not all is going to be good.

There was \$10 million per year for dementia support and money for palliative care, which, again, I have applauded the government for, and I'm glad to see, at least, a step in the right direction.

Sadly, the government cut \$815 million to physician services, which is further preventing patients from receiving the care that they deserve. Like anything—I'm a recreation director from way back. I believe that you keep people healthy. You're proactive and you ensure they stay in good health. You don't always go the opposite way and try to fix them in the most costly form after they get ill or sick. Again, it's challenging that I do not see that.

South Bruce Peninsula is identified as an area of high physician need, and yet the minister removed that designation just recently.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we asked for three things in this budget: We wanted to see that they were addressing debt; we wanted to see that they were addressing front-line health care services; and we wanted to see that they're addressing the hydro cost. In fact, 85% of Ontarians told them, "Do not sell Hydro One." There's a \$750-million revenue there that is going to be gone in perpetuity. Where does that come from, Mr. Speaker? What does that fund?

I'm going to close with one other one. We've talked a lot and we've heard a lot in the last week and a half about free tuition. The Premier said she has some explaining to do, as it's not really free. Our leader, Patrick Brown, asked this morning for a definition. We want to know: What is your definition of "free" in clear black and white? "Free" is not just a buzzword at the top of a newspaper heading; "free" should actually mean totally free, which is what they tried to suggest to people.

We need to ensure that there's job creation. We need to ensure that money is going to the front line for health care; reducing our debt so we can actually fund more front-line care and services for the great people of this province; and we need to see a government in this budget that was actually thinking of Ontarians, not themselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for questions and comments, I have to revert back to an unparliamentary remark that was made in the previous round of questions and comments. I would ask the member for Nipissing to withdraw.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I must have missed the comment. Could he repeat it so I know what he just withdrew?

Mr. Bob Delaney: You can always try a few of your favourite words and see if we object.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you.

It's always a pleasure to follow my good friend from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. My late father used to say that when somebody can speak that fast, he must have been inoculated with a gramophone needle, because he just keeps going and going.

He did say a couple of good things about the budget, and I think that's a good thing because there are a few things in the budget that grabbed the headlines and are

worth acknowledging.

I think it's worthwhile to acknowledge that some seniors will get the shingles vaccine without payment. I think that's good. I think some of the lowest-income seniors are going to get prescription drugs without cost, and I think that's good. But those are the headlines. It's like the free tuition. That's the headline, but upon reflection, it isn't free and the vast majority of seniors in Ontario are going to have to pay almost double for the cost of their prescription drugs.

We can acknowledge that there are a few steps in the right direction in the budget, as the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound said, but there are a lot of steps backwards, and that's what we have to take into account.

One step that really bothers me, I guess, is the continued determination by the Liberal government to continue to sell our public shares in Ontario Hydro. Ontario Hydro is a public asset. It should be held in the public trust. It should always be there to benefit our children and our grandchildren, and it should never be sold to private, for-profit interests. Unfortunately, the Liberals continue to head in that direction, and that is not something to be proud of.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member

for York South-Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for

recognizing me.

Well, it seemed like Apocalypse Now was coming down when I heard the member speaking. I just want to reassure him, especially from a fiscal responsibility point of view, that our government is committed to balancing the budget by 2017-18. We are projecting a lower deficit, a deficit of \$7.5 billion. We're on track to eliminate the deficit. Year after year, we have beaten our targets, and we are on track to do that.

I just wanted to reassure him also that we are planning to help businesses and small businesses in our province grow. That's very important. Every industry, every producer, is important to our economy. That's why we have announced a new Business Growth Initiative to respond to the challenges that businesses have and to help them with opportunities, trying to lower their business costs and helping small businesses grow in a global leadership role, if that's possible.

If they are in the food industry, that's even better. We have been talking so much lately here at Queen's Park about French's ketchup. That's one example of how we can help to boost our own companies.

We also want to help to commercialize our products and made-in-Ontario technologies, and help to reduce the regulatory burdens that businesses have. The priority of this government is to help our economy grow. It's to help to create jobs. That's why we're investing so much in infrastructure. We want to make life easier for average Ontarians, and that's why we're investing in health care and in the things that matter the most to Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to comment on the speech by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

You know, I had a grandson born last July. Interjections.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes, a grandson, number five. And guess what he got: \$22,000 in debt as soon as he was born. That's what he got, \$22,000 in debt, and that's gone up since I have been here. Twenty-two thousand dollars and it just keeps going up.

The member also spoke about agriculture. I come from an agricultural community in Perth-Wellington. Twenty-eight million dollars was cut from the agricultural budget-\$28 million. You know, farmers have to live with the weather they get. They have to fight disease, they have to fight insects, and now they have to fight this government. It just gets to be unbearable at times. 1550

The government depends on the hard-work ethic that farmers have. They plant their crops every year, they hope they get a good harvest out of it and they hope the prices are good. One thing that really is hard on them-it weighs on their minds—is what the government is going to do or not do to them. Certainly, that is something that I've seen for many years with this government.

Agriculture is, I think, the highest-grossing business we have in Ontario. It supports many businesses in the GTA—dairies, cookie-making industries—and yet the government pays little regard to it, because they know that farmers will continue on and work hard. And yet they cut their budget by \$28 million this year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound brings a lot to this debate because he can speak so quickly. He can get it all in in a very short amount of time, as he always does. But he listed off a number of issues that make it hard for us to support the budget on this side of the House, and genuinely so.

For me, though, I always go back to the process. We took the time, we spent the money, we travelled around this province. We did so with what at the time I thought was earnest effort to do so, to listen to the people of this province. We made a commitment to those people in those budget consultations that we would actively listen

to them and then apply what they had said to this budget process. Of course, that didn't happen, and that's one of the biggest weaknesses, as far as we can see: that there is such a serious disconnect between what is contained in this budget and what we heard from the people outside of this place.

This morning, I was at the inaugural anti-racism summit for our university campuses. That's what they were basically pleading. They were pleading for the politicians in this place to actively listen to what's actually going on in the province of Ontario, from a racism perspective and a discrimination perspective, and then apply that knowledge through the lens of race. We tried to do the equivalent of that from a financial perspective throughout that process.

What you have here, then, is a flawed process. You have a flawed document that does not meet the needs of the people of this province. Regardless of some of the good things that we were fighting for that are contained within this budget, it makes it impossible for us to support it, and the people of this province understand that full well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound can now reply.

Mr. Bill Walker: Both the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, a good friend of mine, and Kitchener–Waterloo talked about me talking fast. The reality is that I talk fast because, sadly, this government has created so many issues that there's lots to talk about, and I don't want to miss anything that's important to the people of Ontario.

The member from York South-Weston talked about the deficit. I just want to reiterate that they're going to get a \$1.8-billion transfer from the federal government, \$1.9 billion extra in personal income tax revenue, \$500 million in sales tax increases, \$700 million in corporate income tax revenue and an additional cap-and-trade revenue of \$500 million. The Financial Accountability Officer is projecting that they're going to have \$4 billion more in revenues. If they don't come up with that, look out for the taxes coming.

She talked about wanting businesses to grow and the priority. Well, their stats actually show that instead of their prediction of 93,000 jobs in 2016, they're now projecting 78,000, so 15,000 fewer jobs. I would attribute that to the increasing hydro costs, the ORPP and the taxes they're bringing in, the increased taxes on gasoline for operation and the red tape.

She talked about the food industry being a high priority of this government. I wish their hunger for the agricultural industry and the food that farmers actually produce was as significant as their hunger for power. Let's not forget they cut \$28 million from that supposed priority industry.

My colleague from Perth-Wellington, congratulations on his fifth grandson, but he brings a very, very important perspective to it: His new grandson was born into \$22,100 of debt. I heard one of the members opposite

saying, "It's not like we're asking you to pay today." No, but we're tired of you putting it onto our kids, our grandkids and our great-grandkids so that you can cling to power. You can't just keep spending like pirates. You have to put things in fiscal order.

As I said earlier, we spent \$12 billion on interest payments. That means that we actually aren't providing services and programs at the front lines of health care, education and for those most in need in our province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Applause.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd go easy on your clap; it might not be what you want to hear.

Speaker, basically, I'm well known as a guy that comes from the hip, and this is probably—a lot of the people I represent feel this way. I'm going to speak for myself as well as the people I represent—the majority of them, at least.

I'd like to cut right to the chase: This budget has the wrong priorities and does little or nothing to help the vast majority of Ontarians. In fact, it actively makes life harder for hundreds of thousands of them. This should be called the "no jobs today, probably none tomorrow act."

Good, stable jobs are disappearing, especially in my community. People feel worried about their own future and about their children's future. They work harder; they often commute longer; they try to manage higher accommodation costs and higher debts than ever before; and they spend less and less time enjoying their friends and family. Education, health care, home care and long-term care are in a mess. The costs of electricity and housing are rising relentlessly. And thanks to the equally relentless rise in precarious employment, a vast number of people find themselves without dental or medical benefits, without a pension plan or even without paid sick days. Speaker, the pension plan crisis in Hamilton is brutal, and this budget, like many that came before it, has done little or nothing to fix that.

Very little has changed under the current Premier, other than the name on the door. The Liberal boondoggles and scandals continue; they may even be ramping up, I'm afraid.

The catastrophic mismanagement of the energy file, which has inflicted misery on Ontarians and driven industry out of the province, has only accelerated with a sell-off of Hydro One. This government lacked the competence to fix Hydro One so that it could deliver affordable, secure and green power for all Ontarians. Instead, it's selling off Hydro One to private investors, washing its hands of the problem and removing any lines of accountability. Instead of doing their job and listening to the public and fixing public power, the Liberals listened to Bay Street yet again, and yet again they put private profits ahead of the public interest.

This government continues to make a virtue of having one of the lowest combined corporate tax rates in North America, even lower than Alabama. Its corporate friends are kept happy, healthy, wealthy and wise, while schools and hospitals and the rest of us are underfunded. For the seventh straight year, hospital funding will not keep up with the rate of inflation—not even the rate of inflation. We see the results of this all over our province. Outrageously, First Nations communities in northern Ontario were forced to declare a state of emergency in February because the health needs of the indigenous people are still not being met by the provincial and federal governments. This is a disgrace. It's terrible. This is Canada. There was a state of emergency in 2016, not because of a natural disaster or an accident, but because of sheer systematic neglect.

Liberal cuts to health care are hurting patients in my hometown of Hamilton. Hamilton Health Sciences is cutting nearly 100 full-time positions at St. Joe's. It's cutting 136 positions at the-mental health services are being moved out of my riding and out of east Hamilton. Those services are a lifeline for people in need, but now the whole east side of Hamilton will be without psychiatric care. Patients will be asked to take the bus for an extra hour each way to the remaining facility on Hamilton Mountain. These additional burdens of time and money will only discourage patients from getting the help they need. RNs, RPNs, social workers, child care workers, technologists, lab staff and many other workers are all threatened by cuts at St. Joseph's, and they know the impact this will have on their community and their friends. The closure of this east region mental health service is a body blow to my riding, which is the second poorest in Ontario. Poverty breeds poor health, including mental health. This clinic exists to provide communitybased support. Instead, we're asking people to travel an hour each way out of their community to get help.

This pattern of short-term cuts with long-term costs and consequences is the hallmark of this Liberal government, and it's occurring across our province in many places. This budget does nothing—I repeat, nothing—to address the great structural problem facing our health care system, which is that the proportion of seniors continues to grow and our health care system is just not funded, equipped or designed to deal with their health care needs. This government just keeps on passing the buck to the next generation and the next government, or hopes that helicopter drops of money from its federal friends will save it from the consequences of its actions, from its lack of vision and from its inability to get its priorities straight.

1600

I know that many of my colleagues on the other side of the House have honourable intentions. One might question, however, to where the road they're paving leads. If recent newspaper reports are correct, then the Premier has been obliging her ministers to spend as much time as possible balancing the Liberal Party books instead of managing their own portfolios and attempting to reduce their deficit in socially responsible ways.

There was a cartoon in the Toronto Star the other week that showed the Premier turning Girl Guides away from her office with a sign reading, "\$6,000 For Access." It was one of those cartoons where you laugh at first and

then you want to cry. I did a quick calculation. Since the province's debt is about to pass \$300 billion—and we are all greatly indebted to the Liberal government for that—then if the Premier was indeed to remove the key card reader at her office door and replace it with a credit card reader, and if she were so generous as to redirect those admission fees to the public purse, then she would need 50 million visitors at her office to pay off that debt. Every Ontarian over the age of nine would need to troop through her door, credit card in hand, four times. Although at the rate this government is going, they'd be drafting seven-year-olds and eight-year-olds in time for next year's budget.

There are times, even so briefly, where I feel optimism, or at least a little hope. I had that feeling heading into this budget, especially after attending the pre-budget consultations in Hamilton. The speakers were very passionate and so dedicated to exposing injustice and explicitly laying out their community needs that I thought this government would not fail to hear their call and pay them some heed in this budget. But, Speaker, once again the Liberal members of that committee never even had a chance to report back to the cabinet to influence the budget, for this budget was already written, concocted in a smoke-filled room over the holidays, no doubt, with no input from the public. The public interest was not the government's interest, and this is a terrible thing to say in a democracy—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Miller: Are we done over there?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the government members to please come to order. I'm trying to hear the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who has the floor.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Speaker.

This government's interest and the public interest have grown so far apart in this province, and we know that by the fact that the government rushed this budget out before they even had a chance to hear the public interest. They would, or should, be ashamed to introduce a budget that was so contrary to the wishes expressed by the people of this province, and they found it easiest to act before the public's views ever reached their desks. One wonders how often the Premier and her ministers meet real members of the public, because if they did and had an opportunity to hear what my constituents and all our constituents are constantly crying out for, then how could they, in good conscience, act so contrary to their pleas time and time again?

As one example, what do we as MPPs hear over and over again from our constituents and our municipalities? We hear the desperate need for affordable housing in this province. We hear that not only is there a terrible shortage but that the units already in place are deteriorating to the point of no repair because they have shaved off the maintenance funding for the last 20 years. What was the budget's response to the overwhelming demand? The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing saw a \$20-million cut. A great response. Sometimes it feels like this

government reads the pre-budget consultation report only in order to do the exact opposite to what the people want.

Now I will concede that the government is finally showing movement on the topic of inclusionary zoning, which my colleague from Parkdale—High Park has been demanding for years, but there's not a penny of extra money to build new housing or repair our existing stock of public housing—not a penny anywhere. Some of these units are actually uninhabitable due to decades of neglect, and there's no money to turn them into livable homes for the hundreds of thousands of people crying out for an affordable roof over their heads. CityHousing Hamilton can only afford to spend less than half of its annual spending need to maintain its properties.

I see nothing to protect the steel industry in this province in this budget—nothing. They're talking a good game. The minister and the other minister and the Premier are talking to their friends in Ottawa, but while that's going on, the steelworkers in Hamilton are losing their jobs, they've lost their benefits, and who knows when US Steel is going to attack their pensions? It's absolutely deplorable.

This is a blueprint of what's going to happen to other companies in this country, in our province. It's a corporate agenda that's been going on for 15 to 20 years. I can remember fighting this 20 years ago in Ottawa. I can tell you right now, Speaker, this is just the start of it. When they start attacking the public sector, you're going to see some real outcries.

This government needs to be calling in favours with the federal government that they say is so great and their fellow people-in-arms—the same party. Well, if that's the case, you've got a majority government in Ottawa. They should be loosening up the purse strings for Ontario, giving more money back to this province in the proportion of the amount of people we have. The members over there, including the member from St. Catharines, have always fought for fair funding from Ottawa. Well, folks, here's your chance. You've got a majority government in Ottawa. Get them to open their purse strings and send some money to Ontario to help us with all these needs of the province, plus your infrastructure costs, plus all the other debts that you're racking up. There's lots of money in Ottawa. Maybe they should start sending it to where it should have been going a long time ago, and that's Ontario.

Stelco retirees whose medical benefits have been stripped by US Steel and whose pensions are now threatened are in a state of frenzy. They need help from both the provincial and federal governments—both governments—not just passing the buck between each other, blaming the feds, the feds blaming the province. You're both Liberal governments; you should do something to help these people.

Let me give you an example of a blatant disconnect between the public and what they're calling for. Seniors—well, not only seniors—have been asking for years for better health and long-term-care coverage. There are so many holes in this system that are only being patched over by banknotes from people's pockets. One of my constituents contacted my office for help regarding one of these holes in health care. His wife had suffered a stroke and was taken to Hamilton General Hospital by ambulance. By definition, this would be described as a medically necessary use of an ambulance.

While dealing with this deeply traumatic event, an invoice arrived in the mail for a co-payment towards the ambulance ride. In this province, under this government, medically necessary isn't enough to have your ambulance costs covered either. You've got to pay for the ambulance. Some of these people can't even afford to put the lights on. We pride ourselves on being a province and country where you don't have to worry about the cost of health care and where you don't have to worry about your bills, but we all know that isn't true. How awful for a husband facing this terrible situation to have a bill for an ambulance land on his doorstep when he's going through that traumatic experience.

I hear many stories like this every week in my office of mean and burdensome little payments in this system that aren't covered by OHIP and come right out of their pockets. Did the government do anything for people like him? I don't think so.

Instead of reducing the burden on seniors by removing these mean changes, it increased the annual deductible on drug payments by 70%. Seniors earning more than \$19,500 a year will have to cough up 70% more for prescription drugs. Why is this? It's because the Premier calls them affluent seniors. The Premier, who's living on a six-figure budget, calls seniors earning less than \$20,000 affluent. The Premier—presiding over a record sunshine list, handing out six-figure contracts, salaries, bonuses and severance payments to Liberals left, right and centre—is so out of touch, so utterly oblivious to reality, that she called low-income seniors affluent. I challenge any member on that side or any member in this House to live on \$20,000 a year. Good luck.

Speaker, \$20,000 a year is not affluent. What exactly would they call Saäd Rafi and the other Pan Am executives with their buyouts? If you compare it to what he got for a buyout, that would be good for about 20 years for a person making \$20,000. You can take 20 years of making \$20,000 with not even having to get up and go to work thanks to the payouts they give these guys. How would they describe the new CEO of Hydro One and his \$4-million annual income? I'd call that super-affluent. I'd call that ridiculous, on the senior side of affluent, affluent today and more affluent tomorrow.

Let me spell out the truth in language this government would recognize. The Liberal government has broadened the affluence of a select few, and a select few only. This government has been reading George Orwell all too closely in its effort to redefine language and has missed the real point entirely. Privatization is "broadening of ownership." Precarious work is "contemporary mobile employment." Low-paying, insecure, temporary or contract and possibly part-time work is "contemporary." Living from paycheque to paycheque, falling behind in

your rent and not being able to afford food is the bright new future in Liberal Ontario.

1610

Contemporary employment—get used to it. When they describe it like that, you realize that they're not going to go do a thing about it, and they can't. They've accepted it as a fact, as the structure of the modern economy rather than an ugly injustice that needs to be rectified and redefined. "It's the way things are," they tell us. "It's just the way it is, and you'd better get used to it because it's 2016."

We certainly know that good job creation is out of fashion with this government, because they keep revising their employment targets lower and lower and then missing even their own lowered expectations. It's pretty bad when you miss your own lower expectations. This budget missed its targets on job creation. This budget missed the government's targets on GDP growth, on employment growth and on business investment.

One of the first things they did in this year's budget was to admit they're not going to reach the jobs target they set for themselves in last year's budget. Last year, they actually downgraded their jobs prediction by 65,000 jobs. Year after year, this government talks a great game about job creation. We'll see more and more people in precarious work.

While we see good manufacturing jobs leaving this province, and while we see entire communities in the highest figures when it comes to unemployment rates in the country over and over again, yet in this budget the Liberals are pulling back their estimate of how many jobs they will be able to support or create in 2016-17. It offers no hope for struggling families. It offers no hope for young people who are trying to get a start in life. Children are still going to bed hungry in this province. I have 6,000 kids in my area who are going to school without the proper nutrition. That's terrible. One of the biggest cities in Ontario: 6,000 kids. How many schoolrooms will that fill?

This government's performance has been miserable. They don't even bother to set targets for homelessness and poverty reduction anymore. Their goals are aspirational. Past performance is one of the best guides to future performance, and even the government itself is dimly aware of the history of these failures. By removing goals and targets, it has redefined success and failure for itself, but only for itself—only for its own little bubble.

We on the side of this House are not fooled, nor are the millions of Ontarians outside facing higher costs and worse jobs, looking at 13 years of tired, out-of-touch, underperforming government that has seriously lost its

One fine example, Speaker—and this is from Hamilton. I had the privilege of sitting on the committee in Hamilton listening to the pre-budget presentations. I heard many sad stories and many wonderful constructive recommendations. We heard about the government's failure to adequately protect correctional officers, but the most disgraceful fact was that we learned that there is an

equivalent—as I said before—of 270 classrooms of children who use food banks in Hamilton. That is an embarrassing, sobering, serious statistic that should leave us all in this Legislature ashamed, because in 2016 we have the solutions for child poverty, but in Liberal Ontario there are thousands upon thousands of classrooms worth of children who depend on food banks. If this government was to live up to its ideals, this would be one of the first places it would start. It would be one of the priorities of this budget, but it isn't.

Speaker, I cannot support this budget. It does not reflect the voices or priorities of the people of this province or the people I represent. It was designed without public input or consultation by a government that thumbed its nose at this Legislature and wasted the time of all kinds of citizen panels who sought to speak to this budget process. It has missed its opportunity. The NDP and I will not be supporting it, and the people of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek can very much understand why.

Speaker, in my closing minute I would just like to put a little bit of reality into this place. I've sat here for years and I've seen the waste. This government, with all due respect, has had more scandals in the last six years than entire governments of this country in the last 100. That's unbelievable. That's unbelievable, and we're not done yet. We're not done yet; there's more coming.

What I'm saying to you, Speaker, is this: Once this government gets its priorities straight and starts taking care of the pensioners, starts taking care of hospitalization for the people and seniors, starts taking care of the people—instead of working from the top down, Speaker, maybe they should work from the bottom up. The first thing that gets hit when there's a recession or there's a lack of budgetary monetary needs are the social programs at the bottom: the schools, the ODSP, the OW. They start hammering the bottom. Yet for some strange reason, the banks, the insurance companies and everyone else are announcing record profits. What's wrong with that picture, Speaker? What's wrong with that picture? Are the banks, or the insurance companies, not satisfied with a 50% increase? No.

A woman comes into my office, toting three kids, with no place to live. She can't feed her kids. But that's okay, because the banker is driving a Mercedes and he made whatever—\$5 million.

I'm telling you, this country has got to wake up, because it's happening in the States too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I hope I didn't sound that negative when I was in opposition. Surely not.

Mr. Paul Miller: You probably did.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I probably did. I have to agree with the member. I probably did.

There were so many good things in the budget, and the government members will talk about those. I know there are things that the opposition disagrees with, so this is part of the process, and I certainly accept that.

I was surprised that the member brought up the issue of access and so on, because he mentioned fundraising that took place. It reminded me, Mr. Speaker—because he mentioned Liberal fundraising—that there was a dinner held at the Royal York in Toronto-you will recall reading about this-where people had to pay \$10,000 a shot to have access to the NDP and the NDP leader. Now, not only that, but they brought in Rachel Notley, the new Premier of Alberta, which, of course, then would attract the oil barons from the west who had offices in Ontario to come to a gathering of this kind. So just as my good friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek talked about me not throwing stones in a glass house, I want to remind him of that, when he raised that particular issue. And \$10,000: Wow, that's a big figure. I can remember when the NDP didn't take corporate donations. Boy, things have changed.

The other thing that I want to mention—there are a lot of things that are proposed by the opposition. One of my thoughts that has come forward from everybody who's proposing things is that nobody wants to talk about tax increases—of course, corporate tax increases, which would bring in a minimal amount of money—but if you're going to make significant changes that incur a lot more costs, there's going to have to be an increase in taxes. Everybody wants more, but the opposition is not going to raise its taxes except in one specific small area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the speech from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

He did bring up the fact that the government just didn't listen to the pre-budget consultations. That's because, as was pointed out by the member from Nipissing, they had already written the budget. It went for translation on January 27. That's when it went to translation, so it was written before that.

The SCFEA committee—the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs—was having its meetings. It travelled around and flew around the province from the 18th to the 22nd of January. It was in Hamilton; it was in Windsor; it was in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa. Then on February 1 and 2, it met here in Toronto.

Little did they know that what they were doing was just all a sham. It was all for show. It was all about making it look like the government was listening, and making it look like the government cared.

All these people, the 146 different delegations that came before the committee, thinking that the government was listening—I mean, this is just not right. They all took time and they took effort to put their thoughts together—and to travel, in many cases, in northern Ontario—so they could be heard. They would naturally assume that they were going to be heard, but it was just all for show, and so much that is the case with this government.

I think that is absolutely terrible. What can you believe from a government that just goes through the motions of listening and has no intention whatsoever of listening to what the people have to say? It certainly didn't listen to seniors, when we see their drug costs going up, for most seniors, by 70%. And they certainly didn't listen to the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, a government that just isn't listening: That's what we have today.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek was talking about what we heard in Hamilton. Those were painful delegations to hear, because these people were desperate. These were parents who were concerned about their children. These were parents and members of the community who knew that the lack of a comprehensive housing strategy left kids moving from school to school and compromising their success.

It's interesting to hear the minister without portfolio come back at this member for what he said by saying, "Oh, well, we have to talk about taxes." Why is it okay to continue to download the mismanagement of this government to everyday Ontarians, to the citizens of this province, but not okay to have an honest discourse on the corporate tax rate, which for the province of Ontario is lower than for the state of Alabama? Why is it not okay to have that conversation?

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: And when this minister says, "Oh, it's just a minimum," maybe that's the problem. Maybe the fact that this member and this government think that \$1 billion that could be raised with a modest increase in corporate tax is a minimum of money—maybe that's the complete and utter disconnect of this government, that they think \$1 billion is nothing.

The process was flawed. I think this government has basically just revealed to the people of this province that they are not interested in listening to the people. They have their own agenda; it is the Liberal agenda, and they are moving forward with it. Quite honestly, a majority does not mean you get to undermine the democracy. That does not happen in the province of Ontario, and that's what happened. Both the finance critics filed a dissenting report for that budget, and there was quite a kerfuffle, Speaker, because it has never happened before that critics have filed a dissenting report on a budget that has already been delivered in advance of the committee report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Before I get started and talk about the many things there are to celebrate in the budget, I also wanted to highlight something that my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans reminded me of just now, qu'hier a été la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. I know those of us who are francophone celebrate, but I think all Ontarians can celebrate this important day where we celebrate French language and culture around the world.

I would like to highlight a few things about the budget that I think are worth celebrating in my two minutes. I won't get through them all, but there's a few things that I have heard from my constituents in Etobicoke Centre that I think are particularly important and are going to change and improve the lives of Ontarians.

An area that I'm particularly passionate about, because I represent a community where we have quite a number of seniors in the riding, is that of health care. I know the opposition talks a lot about cuts to health care. I don't know how they have done their math, but when I look at page 282 of the budget, I see \$1 billion more for health care and I see a 1% increase in hospital-based funding for operating expenditures. That's \$345 million. I see increases in funding for community care, something that's incredibly important to my community, where so many seniors have talked to me about that, but also families who are caring for their aging parents have talked to me about that. There are investments in cancer care, in home care. These are all really important investments that will improve the quality of life of people in my community.

Another thing that's important, of course, and that we've talked a lot about is the change to the Ontario Tuition Grant, something that will provide greater access to post-secondary education for our young people. I know our Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has been working on this very, very hard, and I congratulate him and our Premier on a wonderful initiative that will help our students access post-secondary and help them achieve an even greater potential in the years to come. I know that in the years to come we will look back on this as a transformational initiative that helped improve the quality of life of our young people.

Lastly, of course, I just want to highlight that we are on track to balance the budget, something that I'm proud to be part of. I know we will continue working towards getting value for taxpayers' dollars.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's four questions and comments. We return to the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his reply.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would just like to end this two minutes coming from the heart here. I listened to all these answers about the budget and how wonderful it is. Well, I would be pleased to invite the new member and the older member to take a tour with me of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek and actually talk to the people that come into my office in droves about the problems they're facing in this economy, whether it be pensions or being cut off from their benefits. I have 85-year-old women phoning up in tears.

Then they're going to raise their health costs and all the things—that's great. I guess it's good if you live in affluent Toronto, but when you get outside of Toronto, there are people facing difficult times. I'm sure that some of the members over there that aren't from Toronto know that.

To sit here and listen to this—you know, I'm really disappointed. I respect the member from St. Catharines to the utmost, but for him to take what I said and turn it into "Well, you had a \$10,000 fundraiser"—listen, Speaker, if parties don't have fundraisers; if the opposition parties

can't raise money to fight a government, to have money to be able to defend their position and to be able to—we don't have the papers in our back pocket. We don't have Bay Street in our pocket. As the third party, we fight hard for the people, but we need money to have advertising. We're lucky if we get one television ad. They get 20 ads.

We need the money, Speaker, and I'm not going to stand here and listen to them throw stones about fundraising—it's ridiculous; all parties have to do it—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: —especially the member from Beaches–East York. He's the guy who owns the bar, and he wants to take their tips. That's okay. But the bottom line is—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. Mr. Paul Miller: I have 16 seconds, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Please sit down.

Mr. Paul Miller: But my time is still going.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Please sit down.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the House to come to order, please. I'm going to give the member for Hamilton–East Stoney Creek a few seconds to sum up.

Mr. Paul Miller: I have two seconds? Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that extra time.

All I can say is, the proof is in the pudding. Come and talk to the people in my community, and I'll tell you, it would wipe off any arrogant smiles on that side of the House. Come and talk to the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. Indeed, it's a pleasure to rise in the House and stand before you today—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You're coming to the budget?

Hon. Mario Sergio: —I'm coming to that, thank you; good advice—in support of the budget for 2016. Before I do that, I want to share my 20 minutes with the wonderful Minister of Education, the member from Guelph.

Thank you to the member across the street there.

Speaker, this is a budget that has been designed to grow our economy and create jobs. I agree with the Minister of Finance—he has been working very, very hard; he has been consulting extremely at length—that in Ontario, there is indeed room for everyone. There is room for everyone to compete and do business, and to grow; room to learn; and room to help each other as well. I also believe that this budget does just that. I share the Minister of Finance's belief that no matter which side of the House we are on, we should all agree that what Ontario needs is jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow.

However, that takes commitment and strategic investment, investment that this government is just doing. That is why I'm so proud to be part of a government led by Premier Kathleen Wynne, who believes in its people. But our government is focused on building an Ontario that is every bit as compassionate and competitive. Before I go into some of the details of the budget, I want to make some comments on the budget being seen by the eyes of seniors, and especially my seniors.

Seniors have been talked about a lot in the House, not only today but in the last while. In answering some of the calls that I got this past Saturday—not this one here; the other one—I had two very wonderful calls from my area,

from the Chalkfarm community.

I answered the call, and I was given the name of Maria. So I give her a call, and Maria gets on the phone. She's excited that I called her back, and she says, "Now, you tell me, Mario, why I have to pay an extra \$170 for the medicine, for the drugs."

I said, "You don't have to."

1630

"Yes, I heard people said it in the House."

"You don't have to. Sometimes, especially when we debate the budget, there may be some disagreement, but it is not so. If you have a minute, I'll tell you what's in the budget for you and for other seniors."

"You can tell me. Take all the time you want because

I'm not going anywhere. I'm in a wheelchair."

"Okay, that's fine." So I start to tell Maria what's in the budget for her and for other seniors like her in the province of Ontario. Speaker, I have to say that when I was finished with Maria, not only was she happy, she was smiling, because I took the time to explain to her what's in this budget, let alone in past budgets.

She said, "How come we don't know about those

benefits?"

"Well, you know, you're watching TV."

"Yes, I watch TV every day."

"But unfortunately, we cannot say everything while you're watching TV." I said, "Have you heard anything else about what's in the budget?"

"No, only that I'm upset that I keep on hearing there's \$170 and \$170. It certainly bothers me because I just

make above \$19,100."

"Okay, Maria, since you have some time, let me tell you what's in the budget for you as well as other seniors. First of all, home care is important; community care is important. We have added an extra \$250 million so indeed seniors like you can receive more care at home."

"Oh, that's good," she said.

"About that: You're saving another \$170 because you don't have to pay for the shingles vaccine."

"Oh, I didn't know that. Okay."

"You know that we are investing another \$75 million over the next three years in community-based residential hospice and palliative care. Maria, lots of seniors go in those particular places."

"Indeed."

"We're also investing another \$10 million annually in Behavioural Supports Ontario. That is for initiatives to help residents with dementia." When I said "dementia," she said, "Don't tell me about it. I already know about that." "Well, that's wonderful"—another complex behavioural and neurological condition. I said, "By the way, Maria, you know that if you have to go into the hospital or someone is going to take you into a hospital, now we have cut down the rates for parking by 50%."

"Oh, really?"

"Really. By the way, for the medicine—for this \$170 you told me about—people like you, in your income bracket, some 173,000 Ontarians don't pay any more than the first \$100."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes, Maria."

She said, "Is there anything else?"

I said, "Yes, indeed. As well, we are saving you \$70 because we are removing the debt retirement charge." By this time, Speaker, I can tell that Maria—through the phone, if you will—is smiling. She's not only happy, but she's smiling.

I said, "Maria, by the way, since I have you on the phone, you know there are some other benefits on top of this that you already should be receiving."

She said, "What other benefits?"

"If you qualify, you're entitled to receive another \$500 from the Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant."

"I never got this."

"No. You have to declare it when you do your income tax." She was smiling. I said, "If you qualify, Maria, you're entitled to another \$1,131 from the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit."

Mr. Arthur Potts: Wow. Maria's happy.

Hon. Mario Sergio: She was not happy, but she was smiling. She was smiling.

Also, I said, "One more thing: We threw in another \$287 on the Ontario Sales Tax Credit." She was happy, I have to tell you.

But the most interesting call was the second person I called. She said, "I know what you guys are saying. I know the size of the House and I know why you're saying that, but it's not fair because you're not being honest with us, especially with our seniors."

I said, "How is that?"

"You're confusing us because you say one thing. We hear the other side and they say something else. Then we

hear the opposition say something else."

I said, "This is the debate in the House." But she said, "It's not fair. If you can't say the truth in the House, you should resign." I said, "Maria"—the other lady was another Maria—"unfortunately, that is not the way it works." But she said, "You know something, Mario"—we are on a first-name basis. I said, "Look, in the House, unfortunately, we say things that, yes, we shouldn't say," but the point was made.

To go into a little bit more detail—I know I only have one and a half minutes left, so I don't want to go into the other details. But let me say that the budget itself is about jobs and the economy. It's one of the most important points that our Premier, since she took office, has been pounding on, putting out money for infrastructure to

create jobs for the people of Ontario. When I'm in my riding, I don't hear any complaints. The only thing that people tell me—they say, "Look, if you want to increase taxes a bit, that's okay, as long as my son, my daughter and I have a job, as long as we work." I think that's the important thing that sometimes we forget: that as long as people are working, they can go shopping, they can spend money, and they don't mind if they have to pay an extra buck. But they want to see a government that is responsive to their needs, to deliver the care that they need when they need it. They want to make sure that we provide for a good education—and I'm sure that the minister will talk about that.

I want to dwell a bit longer on seniors, because seniors have been talked about quite a bit in the last while. I think, especially our seniors, we must take them very seriously. We must respect them, because they are the people who deserve all of our attention, on both sides of the House. We should be fair. They should be treated fairly, because they demand it. They are everything for us.

Interjection: They helped build this province.

Hon. Mario Sergio: They helped build this province, of course, but above all, they need our respect. I will have more to say about the benefits that are in the budget for seniors, but I'm very grateful that at least I put that on the record and let you know how some of my seniors in my riding feel. It's the same, wherever I'm travelling in Ontario: All seniors want the same respect. It doesn't matter where they live.

Speaker, I'll defer to my colleague the member for Guelph. I thank you for your time and I thank the members for their attention.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph and Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to my colleague the minister responsible for seniors for speaking about seniors. I wanted to speak a little bit about various educational issues. I'm going to start off with my own ministry.

One of the things that we've talked a lot about, and that there has been a lot of public interest in over the last little while, has been the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In fact, they had said that we need to teach all students about the history of residential schools, the history of treaties and the history of our First Nations people in Canada. Most of the viewers probably don't realize this, but that's material that we already introduced into the Ontario curriculum a few years ago. But, in many instances, it's optional curriculum; it would be one example in several. So at the moment, we're going through making sure that all those things that the TRC recommended as mandatory parts of the curriculum will become mandatory in the Ontario curriculum.

The next problem that we face is that, for many of our teachers, it wasn't mandatory learning when they took history, when they took geography, when they took social sciences. So, in the budget this year, we actually

have \$15 million over the next three years precisely to develop resources for the teachers that line up with the new curriculum, to provide professional development for the teachers in the new curriculum so that we can really effectively meet those recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I'm very excited that we were able to do this in this year's budget.

I'm the member for Guelph, and of course, Guelph is a university town. So something else that I think a lot about is university students. When we look at the data, what we see is that students from high-income families are way more likely to go to post-secondary education than students from low-income families. Now, if you look at the data, it is true that the participation rate in Ontario in post-secondary education is higher than in the rest of Canada, and that's actually true at every income level. In Ontario, it's already true that low-income students are more likely to attend than in other parts of Canada. Nevertheless, they're lagging behind, and we don't think that family income should be a barrier to a student who's qualified to go to post-secondary education.

1640

What we've done in this year's budget is we have totally revamped the student aid program for post-secondary. I want to congratulate my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for doing an amazing job of really transforming tuition grants in Ontario. I want to start a bit about the way it is right now.

Right now, there are three ways in which students might get assistance with the cost of going to college or university. First of all, there's a tax credit. The problem with tax credits through your income tax is that you get them way after the fact. You spend the money and then, sometime next year, you get the tax credit. You don't get it when you get the bill for the tuition; you get it eight, 10, 12 months later, after you've already had to spend the money. Then you get the credit.

The associations that represent university and college students have said that it's not really that great when you get it way after the fact. We have the Ontario Student Assistance Program, which is part grant, part loan, but for a lot of that, you don't actually find out till you're about to graduate that some of your loan is going to be converted to grant. It's very confusing. Students don't know up front how much is actually going to be grant.

Then there's the 30%-off tuition program for families under \$140,000, which has been quite successful, but it doesn't apply to everybody; it just applies to students in their first four years out of university. So if, in fact, you're a mature student who got laid off from the job you got out of high school, and the only way you're going to find a decent new job is to go back as a mature student, you don't qualify. If you're one of those students who didn't quite know what to do after university and you took a couple of years figuring it out, you don't qualify for all of that 30% off.

The student associations have actually come to us and said, "You're really trying hard to get lower-income people into university and college, but a lot of the programs you've got right now don't quite hit the target."

What the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has done has totally revamped the program, taken all those three programs and rolled them up into some new programs. The really exciting thing now is that if you are a student who comes from a family with income under \$50,000, the grant you receive up front each year will pay for your tuition or more. So tuition will, in fact, be free for those students who attend college and university whose family income is under \$50,000.

What about those over \$50,000? And I think this is where it hasn't necessarily been clear. For families over \$50,000, there's actually a graduated grant-geared-to-income system. For people in the \$50,000-to-\$80,000 family income bracket, about half of those will qualify for totally free tuition. The rest will qualify for a partial grant, and that goes geared to income all the way out to families with \$160,000 in income. So in fact, there is a grant-geared-to-income system for all those students from families in the \$50,000-to-\$160,000 bracket, and of course there are still loans available as well. But what it does do is make sure that, while there's support for middle-income families, we make sure that the students from the lowest-income families will, in fact, have access to college and universities.

Now, because I'm the member from Guelph, I must mention something else. We had a very exciting event in Guelph, specifically at the Ontario Veterinary College, on Friday, where the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities was present. This is an infrastructure budget. We're spending \$160 billion on infrastructure over the next 12 years, and we announced that \$23 million of that infrastructure is going to the Ontario Veterinary College to build an addition and to do some significant renovations in the surgical and anaesthesia suites. I must tell you that that's \$23 million towards a \$33-million project and that people are very excited. As I wandered around over the weekend, I kept hearing from more people who were hearing about this and were very excited that the Ontario Veterinary College will be getting those additions and upgrades to its facilities.

I'm sure, as time unfolds, that we will learn more about the infrastructure investments. I know that one of the things that has been near and dear to people in the Guelph-Kitchener corridor is the four-laning of Highway 7. That's a capital project that will be proceeding.

Also, the upgrading of the GO service from Kitchener-Guelph: In this year's budget, the number of GO train trips will be doubling for those that are initiated in Kitchener, go through Guelph and stop in Acton in your riding, Speaker. The number of trips in the morning will be doubled, and the number of trips home in the evening will be doubled. That is in this year's budget, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to offer my two cents on the debate from the government side. I just thought that I'd point out a few things that haven't been talked about in this budget or were completely ignored.

One is the emergency access process—EAP—for medication use. It used to be six weeks to get a renewal

done. I have a couple of patients back home who are on medication that needs special authorization. They've been on it for years. Usually, the doctor would send the paperwork in and, six weeks later, you'd get a response.

They are still looking at December's information. It's now three or four months of this process being bogged down. Basically, people are now having to pay for the medication because somehow, through this government's bureaucratic process, they've logjammed the system. Whether it's because they have no money to balance the budget and they're using this money to offset their costs or they're just incompetent, I'm not sure which way you go.

This budget also didn't touch on the fact that cancer treatment is moving to oral medication. This government still does not cover oral medications for cancer treatment. They're still using the older treatments—intravenous and injection—and having to utilize our hospital services more often, whereas the newer treatments are oral medications. The Ontario Drug Benefit Program has nothing to do with introducing oral medications. The Canadian Cancer Society sends us emails consistently on this issue, but that wasn't addressed in this budget.

Cutting the assistive devices programs: The disabled in our province are being hit hard because this government has been financially incompetent in delivering services. That's not talked about in this budget.

I only have five seconds. I could go on about the demonstration schools that are being cut in this province that aren't mentioned in this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to make some remarks. I really enjoyed the presentation by the minister for seniors talking about Maria. I think we have a lot of Marias, some not as fortunate as others, some who don't fall into that narrow bracket on income levels and age.

I was talking to a lady in my riding, and she was telling me about feeling that it's a one-two punch at seniors. She gets the uppercut from the private insurer because her husband needs a daily dose of aspirin for a heart condition and a private insurer that she deals with isn't covering that anymore. There's the uppercut, and then the right cross comes from you guys because you're going to double her prescription cost. So she's got to pay more for the private insurer now, for the aspirin, and you guys are going up almost double on her prescription costs because she's in a different bracket than Maria. I feel bad for her.

When I was a reporter, every now and then I'd get assigned to do a story on the Raging Grannies. The Raging Grannies would be out there singing songs, making fun, and protesting government action. I'm expecting the Raging Grannies to be storming Queen's Park at some point, talking about seniors and the cuts that the Liberal government has forced upon them. I tell you this: The Raging Grannies are not amused. You will be hearing from the Raging Grannies, and I think that's a good prediction.

We talk a good game. We brought in the agricultural crop insurance plan last year and we said we're going to protect farmers with beef and pork. Well, guess what? There's no money in the budget for it. We said at the time, "Show me the money." There's no money in the budget. In fact, they cut the ag ministry by \$20 million. Then municipal affairs and housing: another \$20-million cut. After the budget, we say, "Oh, let's talk a little bit about inclusionary zoning at some point in the future." It's not in the budget.

It's not a good budget. It's not worth supporting.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Budgets are a serious time in the yearly governance cycle of Ontario. In this particular budget, we're dealing in the order of \$130 billion, and we're dealing with huge issues: hospitals, health care, infrastructure and care for the elderly.

I was taken aback by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London and I hope the voters of Elgin–Middlesex–London are just as taken aback, because the first thing that he said when he rose in his place—he said, "Well, I'll offer my two cents to the budget." That is a dismissive attitude and that is one of the dismissive attitudes of the Tory party, because every time we've sat down—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): First of all, the House is supposed to allow the debate to take place in an orderly manner. It's the obligation of the Speaker to maintain order.

Secondly, the questions and comments are supposed to relate back to the speeches that were made, not the other questions and comments. We're responding now to the minister responsible for seniors and the Minister of Education. That's what the questions and comments are to relate to.

I'll return to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and ask him to respond to the comments made by the minister responsible for seniors or the Minister of Education.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You're a vile person, Zimmer. Vile.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to withdraw that unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Shameful.

Hon. David Zimmer: Shameful. One of the things that attracts me in this budget—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Ouestions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: I want to just address particularly the comments from the education minister and remind her again that there's nothing in the budget about addressing the school funding formula. A number of schools in my riding are slated to close. This government, for two elections, had promised to review and address the gap in the education funding formula. Yet, again, they

have not done a thing to address the actual funding formula. Was this just another empty promise? Can we really trust them to honour their commitments when they do it just before election time? We've had two cycles here and not one thing in the budget about that.

She talked about the free education. Again, her Premier has stepped up and said, "Well, maybe we need to do a little bit of explaining. We may have run that out, and it's not exactly, if you read the detail"—a very big challenge, from my perspective.

She talked about the \$160-billion infrastructure—yet another reannouncement of the same infrastructure

money they've talked about at every budget.

She talked about \$23 million going to her riding of Guelph, and that's a wonderful thing. It's great to see some investment in all of our ridings. But what I want to ask her is, did she ask any questions when she was getting that \$23 million for her riding about the 30,000 long-term-care beds they promised and committed to Ontarians they were going to redevelop? I've asked the associate minister and the minister, "Where is your plan? If you promised Ontarians 30,000 beds to be redeveloped, surely to goodness you have it."

My colleague from Elgin-Middlesex raised a couple of good points. The EAP program, the Exceptional Access Program—people are waiting three months. They cut the seniors' home renovation tax credit. They cut the family tax credit for athletic abilities, sports, those types of things that keep our children more fit.

He talked about the Assistive Devices Program. Jeff Preston from London, Ontario, was actually waiting nine months just to have his chair assessed. It should have been replaced in five years; it's now in the seventh year, and that's his lifeline.

There's a lot of things this budget could have done better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the ministers can now reply. The Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the members from Elgin-Middlesex-London and Windsor-Tecumseh, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for their comments.

I must say, Speaker, I was a little bit surprised when the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London was speaking, because he was talking about lack of funding for cancer drugs. In fact, what he failed to mention was that this budget increases the funding for cancer care by \$130 million.

The other thing I found a little bit surprising was that we heard rural members pooh-poohing the infrastructure spending. What they actually failed to mention is that this budget included \$300 million annually to small municipalities—rural and northern and small municipalities—for the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund: \$200 million of that is going to be based on just a distribution formula so that every municipality will get part of that infrastructure funding; \$100 million of it will be on an application basis. But we actually did exactly what the Association of Municipalities of Ontario asked

for, which is that the funding from the community infrastructure fund will in fact go to communities outside the GTA and be distributed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased today to rise to speak to the budget bill this afternoon. The yearly introduction of the budget is a solemn and important part of our democratic process here in Ontario and in Canada, yet it is such a commonplace occurrence that I feel it rarely registers in a significant way outside the bubble of Queen's Park. So it comes to be taken for granted by the people of this province that the government is handling the budget with responsibility and respect. They have faith in their elected officials to treat the important duty of government of collecting and allocating their hardearned money with diligence and respect. Unfortunately, I think this government has taken to leveraging the short duration of today's news cycles to create a budget that has just enough interesting news items to obscure the substance of their agenda.

Not-so-free tuition is a great distraction from our debt blowing past \$300 billion. Unfortunately, we also had the government running roughshod over the consultation process with this budget. They brought forward this budget before the committee had even written its report on those consultations. In fact, even the Toronto Star was prompted to remark that "the Liberal government's pretense of consultation looks like obfuscation," and that "the rules of the (rigged) game restrict not only timing but topics." The fact is, the only thing the government took away from those consultations were opportunities for nice photos and media hits, and it certainly shows.

While the Liberal government may not be interested, my colleagues and I have been talking to the people of this province. I have spoken to families, farmers, economists, entrepreneurs, blue-collar workers, young professionals, seniors, business owners and even Ministry of Finance staff, and none of them see their interests represented in this particular budget. What they care about is the cost of hydro, how often they are shelling out money for taxes and fees, uncertain employment, wage

committing with their tax dollars.

I hear it over and over again in coffee shops and boardrooms, in downtown Wallaceburg in my riding and in downtown Toronto. No one believes that this government is looking out for anyone's interests but their own and no one trusts this government to execute any of their plans competently.

stagnation and the untold waste they see this government

So Mr. Speaker, I thought I would take this opportunity to tell the government what I've been hearing and put forward some ideas for discussion. There are no silver bullets to solve our financial situation. Instead, experience has shown that it will take a series of ideas, significant structural changes, real economic growth and related employment growth, among other things, to turn Ontario's economy around and get back in the black.

Small businesses are the economic engines of our communities right across this province. In January, I spent time meeting with and learning from small businesses across my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. For me, it's vitally important to get out and meet with the people throughout my riding and to see first-hand about what is working, what needs improvement and where the government of Ontario can do better.

Speaker, I got such a wonderful response from those small businesses that I decided to expand on that short tour and engage with people right across the province. I wanted to hear from a wide variety of people and businesses to better understand their concerns and how we could get the government working for them again. Over the past several weeks and continuing for several more weeks, I've been meeting with dozen of industry groups, job creators, thought leaders, economists, academics and moms and dads.

One of the first things I heard was that it's time to scrap the Drive Clean program. In the budget, we did actually see some window-dressing around this issue, since the government has said they will eliminate the fee for that program. But the testing itself is still in place. People will still be inconvenienced, still have to pay for costly work on their vehicles, still have to go drive around pointlessly because sometimes that's what the computers need to get a correct reading. And for what? This isn't an effective environmental program anymore. It's an arbitrary requirement that is outdated. In my riding, in the community of Lambton Shores, neighbours down one side of a certain street will have to go get tested, while the people on the other side of the street don't have to. It's time to do away with this program altogether. The half measure of cutting the fee is great, but it is only a half measure.

Speaker, I also continue to hear about the estate administration tax, and I'm quite confident most MPPs in the Legislature do as well. I have yet to meet anyone who thinks this tax is fair or makes sense. You may remember that I introduced a private member's bill to roll back and cap the death tax. Later, our PC leader, Patrick Brown, introduced his own bill, which would have wound down and cancelled the death tax entirely. The Liberals defeated both of these bills, but the problem still remains. I know the death tax is something that everyone is hearing about, as I said. This issue has been around for years, and it's time this government takes notice and addresses it.

I also spoke with real estate agents, homeowners and young people who aspire to home ownership. We discussed ideas on how to make it easier to buy and sell a home in Ontario. Specific ideas discussed included capping the property tax at inflation and eliminating the land transfer tax. I believe these important ideas would bring the dream and stability of homeownership closer to becoming a reality for many in Ontario.

I'm pleased to see this budget hasn't expanded the land transfer tax, because I know that was a strong possibility, and the minister and the government, I believe,

considered that. We need to be eliminating barriers to home ownership, not creating new ones.

Taxes were something that I heard about over and over again. There's a feeling that our tax code is outdated and overly complex. One idea that I heard was to immediately form a committee charged with bringing forward recommendations and a sensible plan to begin modernizing, simplifying and flattening our tax code in Ontario. I agree with that idea. I think it's about time that we sat down and looked at our tax code comprehensively so we can ensure it is optimized and that it represents our priorities. When we add to and take bits from it year after year, it can cease to be cohesive and coherent.

Speaker, I also heard time and time again about the proposed ORPP. Taking more money out of people's pockets in the economy today so a government with, quite frankly, a poor fiscal record can take charge of it doesn't make any sense to people in the province. Why would you trust your retirement savings to a program instigated by a government that paid over \$1 billion to not build gas plants, or that took a \$61-million loss on the sale of Ontera, a crown agency, and paid more for consultants than it received for the telecommunications company itself?

The government has been all over the place with the ORPP, first promising to scrap it if the federal Liberals were elected, then saying they were going ahead anyway, and then delaying it for a year. Even after the announcement of the delay, I continue to see ads for it all over the place. There isn't a clear message on the ORPP. But I can tell you that the more people learn about it, the less they like it.

The bottom line is that when a government doesn't consult with the people to create their budget, they create a budget that isn't for the people. In the end, the policies they have trotted out rest on taking more and more money from taxpayers, and then periodically changing up who gets a small break so they can take a picture and pitch a good-news story.

The reality which underpins all of this is the debt this government has run up. By their own admission and according to their own numbers, this budget will push the province's debt over \$300 billion for the first time in our history. It has been said many times before, but it is worth saying again, that we are now the most indebted subsovereign borrower in the world. There isn't a state or a province in the world that owes as much as Ontario does. The interest payments on the debt alone are costing almost \$1 billion each and every single month.

This reality is distorting our economic decisions. It lays a punishing weight on young families and our elderly alike. This government has devised myriad ways to raid our pockets again and again, from raising the tax on alcohol to licence fees to textbooks to gasoline. So whether you are heating your home, filling up the tank of your car, signing your kid up for hockey or going to university, or if you're a senior who needs medication, your cost of living is going up.

Life is getting harder, as it has, year by year, for over a decade in Ontario. And yet, as much money as we

transfer from our bank accounts to government coffers, the Liberal government's spending outpaces it. They are mortgaging our children's future with deficit after deficit, choosing their own short-term gain over our long-term well-being at almost every turn.

Nine years of deficits, and along the way they have doubled the accumulated debt and driven our debt-to-GDP ratio from 27% to over 40% today, a 48% increase in less than 10 years.

Thirty years ago, the provincial debt was a manageable \$31.5 billion. Nine years ago, it had grown to \$153 billion. Today, it has doubled to our current \$308 billion. That's right, Mr. Speaker: In nine years, Ontario's debt has grown by more than 100%, the highest rate of debt growth of any provincial government in the country. Obviously, this trend cannot be allowed to continue. We simply cannot afford it.

But instead of spending responsibly, the government raids a contingency fund, sells off our assets and raises taxes. Even after they have picked every available pocket, the debt will rise to \$308.3 billion. Our interest payments are expected to rise to \$13.1 billion per year by 2018-19.

I believe that until Ontario's poor financial state is properly addressed, the government will continue—and will be forced—to cut funding to doctors, to close much-needed schools like demonstration schools in our part of the province down in London, and to raise hydro rates to make up for their financial shortfalls.

I introduced the Capping Ontario's Debt Act, Bill 168, a few weeks ago. If passed, my bill would amend the Financial Administration Act to implement a provincial debt cap that prevents the government from raising or borrowing money if the effect of doing so would cause Ontario's net debt to exceed 45% of its GDP.

Speaker, Ontario taxpayers are demanding a credible plan to balance the books and pay down the debt. This is an important conversation that we have to have as a province. Unfortunately, we see a finance minister and a Premier trying to distort this conversation by talking about the deficit as if it were something to be proud of.

The National Post explained this phenomenon well: "Ontario has had a deficit for so long, and at such a size, that it has managed to change the very meaning of 'success' as it pertains to such shortfalls. In Ontario, 'success' only requires beating whatever target the government sets for its annual shortfall. Since they set the projection themselves this isn't hard to do....

"Imagine wandering into your bank, waving your latest credit card statement, which shows that after a decade of trying you still haven't managed to pay off the balance. In fact the balance is growing like an out-of-control tumour, and eating up more money than almost any other expenditure. 'Hey, look,' you boast, 'it's not as bad as I thought! I thought they were going to seize my car, but I may still get another month out of it!'"

Another distortion we see in this conversation, Speaker, is that the Liberal government never distinguishes between spending and investing. It may come as news to some across the aisle, but the words "spending" and "investing" are not interchangeable. It isn't investing in our economy when there is no discernible return on investment, no proof that it will create efficiencies or boost productivity. When the spending is financed by taking money out of the pockets of families and investors, as is the case with their cap-and-trade scheme and the ORPP, we are kneecapping our economy and limiting growth.

This government thinks they know what to do with people's money better than they do, and that a small, elite group is better equipped to make decisions about what an individual's or family's priorities should be. Yet the Liberal government track record proves they are patently unqualified to do this.

The Auditor General highlighted this tendency of the government in her investigation of the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, where hand-picked companies are invited to partake of subsidies and no one bothers to track whether the jobs they create are long-term or whether the so-called investment achieves anything else. In the Auditor General's own words, "The Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure ... has not attempted to measure whether the \$1.4 billion it provided to Ontario businesses since 2004 actually strengthened the economy or made recipients more competitive."

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the ministry's new strategic investment framework does not include a plan for how to measure outcomes from future economic development and employment supports. Or we can talk about how this government does not track the total funding that ministries and agencies invest in research and development—over \$1.9 billion given to universities over the past five years—and doesn't evaluate the impact of that research.

This government keeps throwing money around, but they just can't get anything right. They're nickel-and-diming the families and small businesses of this province, collecting taxes and fees from hard-working people who are struggling with their hydro and grocery bills, and then they fritter this money away without bothering to check if it did any good at all. We desperately need an alternative to the Liberals' top-down, big-spending, government-driven approach. People are sick and tired of hearing about the Premier's aspirations and stretch goals. They're sick and tired of scandals and poorly run programs.

Speaker, what we need to see in this province—what I would like to have seen in this budget—is a bottom-up productivity program which encourages the efficient use of capital and isn't rife with subsidies that distort investment decisions. Instead of paying profitable companies to come to Ontario, we should be creating the conditions that entice businesses and bolster the companies that are already here. Frankly, I don't see any movement in that direction from this government.

This is a budget that firmly establishes that they intend to trudge on with the status quo at a time when it's clear to everyone that change is desperately needed in the province of Ontario. The debt and the cost of servicing the debt are going to continue to crowd out vital services. I should put it on the record again, Mr. Speaker, to remind the government that every man, woman and child in the province now owes \$22,000 each, through no fault of their own, quite frankly. I think of our family: my wife, Kate, myself and our daughter. Our family alone is responsible for \$66,000 in Ontario debt.

Of course, we know that tomorrow we're going to see a big-spending, big-taxing federal budget in Ottawa, which is only going to compound the fiscal challenges that we have in our province.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, I will not support this budget. I won't support a budget that makes our province more unaffordable, uncompetitive and unsustainable.

I'm proud of the work of our finance critic, Mr. Fedeli, the member from Nipissing. I know he was on SCOFEA as well, and he went around the province with the member from Haldimand–Norfolk and other caucus members.

It's just really disheartening when we see a story like we saw today, where they faked, quite frankly, the consultation process. They tried to fake the good people of Ontario. We often see this: When a government has been in power for as long as this Liberal government has, they completely lose touch with the people that they represent. I feel the decisions that they're making are just so out of touch with what the people out there want. I've only been here now for almost five years, but I sense that we have a government that's living in this Queen's Park bubble. If they're talking to the people in Ontario like I'm talking to the people, and my colleagues—there are big problems in the province. They can't ignore, as members of this government, the expensive energy bills that they're hearing about. People are choosing, like the member from Nipissing says, between heating their home and putting food on their table—and hydro bills; sorry and I think it's very unfortunate that Ontario has come to this place because of intentional decisions by this government.

As I said in the beginning, there have been announcements by the government, like the not-so-free tuition, but that's just a distraction from the huge challenges of this debt that we have in the province. They're ignoring the \$308-billion debt that we have, and I hope they come to their senses before they pass this budget to deal with this problem.

Mr. Speaker, it was great to speak to the budget bill today. Thanks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I guess what struck me with what we just heard from the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is the great pretender budget, if you will—pretending to listen, pretending to consult with the people, and yet, as we heard earlier, sending the budget documents out to be translated long before the consultation by the committee that was going around the province

had ever finished and long before the committee sat down and wrote a report on just what they heard.

I remember earlier the minister responsible for seniors was talking about Maria. Maria said, "How can they say something on one side of the House and you guys say something on the other side of the House? Is somebody lying? What's going on?" It's a matter of the interpretation of the facts. If we stand up, Maria, and we say, "They pretended they listened to you, but they didn't really, because they had already sent their document out for translation," that's the truth. There's no lie there; that is the truth. They pretended they were listening when in fact they had already made up their minds. When we hear the Premier say, "Oh, I'd never sell Hydro One," and then she gets convinced otherwise and then starts selling it off in pieces, even though 200 municipalities passed motions saying stop and polling shows 80% of the people of Ontario don't want it sold, it's being sold.

The president of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario is a guy I know. His name is Gerry Graham. He's a former auto worker from Windsor, but he lives in Kingsville now. When you talk about prescription costs going up and the deductible fee going up and the co-pay going up by a dollar, he says many seniors in Ontario can't afford it and seniors don't deserve it. I think those are the facts.

1720

Maria, you may not be paying, but most seniors in Ontario will be paying more for their prescription drugs, and that's the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I agree with one thing that he said and that was that what we need is real economic growth. That's what this budget sets out to address, with the investment in infrastructure and public transit and the services that people depend on.

I do find it interesting, as a quick aside, that he mentioned Drive Clean and the estate administration tax, both of which his party instituted. But we won't go there. We will not go there.

I know, on the other side across, that members support the hospitals in their ridings. They support the schools in their ridings. They support those services that people depend on, because I hear them talking about it every day in the House. Every day here, they talk about it, and that's good. Then I hear, in the same breath, "Well, we shouldn't be running a deficit."

Government is about choices. You have to make a choice. In 2009, we made a choice. We made a choice to invest in stimulus, like the federal government did. We made a choice to invest in the auto sector. That's not a choice that they would have made on the other side; they made that very clear. So—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm getting heckled from my own side here.

The point is, you have to pick a lane, and you guys aren't picking a lane right now. You're not picking a lane. You're saying, "No, we don't want to have a deficit, but just make sure you have all this stuff that the people in my riding are asking me for."

You can't say both things. Leadership is picking a lane, and no one's picking a lane over there. Maybe they might want to think about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate the comments, the thoughtful 20 minutes we had from the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. He brought up some very, very good points.

Some of the issues that we heard about are the costs to families and seniors that will be happening out of this budget. Of course, there are the annual sin taxes, as they're called—alcohol and cigarettes—that will be taxed further.

But it was the cost to seniors that I heard about on our constituency week last week. In fact, in the office I had a group of seniors come and talk about the fact that for all of them in the office, the cost of their drugs will double under this budget. When this budget comes for passage sometime early in April—the 11th or 12th or 13th of April—those seniors' medication costs will double.

Right now, as the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex mentioned, you have to choose between whether to heat or eat. But now it's getting to be the choice of whether to eat or to buy your medications. That's very serious, because these are, in many cases for the seniors—and 92% of all seniors in the province of Ontario are going to see their medication costs almost double. So they're going to have to make those difficult choices.

When you think about their grandkids as well, with the Children's Activity Tax Credit cancelled, and when you think about the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit that got cancelled—this government, because of their waste, their mismanagement and their scandals, is now trying to balance the budget on the backs of children, seniors and families. I find that reprehensible, especially for the seniors who were in my office in North Bay last week.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that the member from Lambton-Kent and I would agree around the financial mismanagement piece. We have a growing body of evidence. We have Auditor General report after report.

The last one, just before Christmas, came out, and the Auditor General reported that "between 2006 and 2014, thanks to incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the province's Liberal government, Ontarians overpaid for electricity to the tune of \$37-billion." This was from the Globe and Mail, but it was commenting on the AG's report.

Over the next 18 years, though, the AG has predicted that consumers will overpay by another \$133 billion.

These numbers are so big that I'm speechless, in my two minutes.

The other commentary, though, and the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex didn't get into this, is that the Toronto Star says, "Rarely has a Liberal government in Ontario tabled a less child-friendly budget than Jobs for Today and Tomorrow."

Think about this: no money for child care. There's no money, even though the research, even though the evidence is very clear and we had a Premier who said she was going to rule from the activist centre and put that research and evidence into play; even though, in 2016, if you want to address poverty in the province of Ontario, you invest in child care. We know this. We know this to be true. There's no new money for that.

The privatization of group homes—this came out last week, Mr. Speaker.

This government seems content to just sideline these important public services that keep kids safe in the province of Ontario.

So you can't blame us for not supporting this budget. There are completely unethical components of this budget which make it impossible for us to support, especially around the financial mismanagement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I believe that concludes our questions and comments.

I return now to the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for his reply.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to thank the member from Windsor-Tecumseh. I thought that was a great line, and it eloquently describes what I was trying to say, by saying that they're the great pretenders. I think that's exactly what this budget is. Again, that consultation process is really disturbing. I'm assuming that all the MPPs, even on the government side, will be disappointed in their own government, in their own Premier's office and finance department's office for faking a consultation process.

I'd like to thank my friend from Ottawa South; our finance critic from our caucus, from Nipissing; and the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, who added to our debate.

Speaker, the bottom line is that when a government doesn't consult with people to create a budget, they create a budget that isn't for the people of Ontario. That's exactly what we're seeing here.

In the end, they have policies that are going to take more and more money from people. It's going to make it a lot tougher to live in Ontario if you're a young family or seniors on a fixed income. If you want to do business in this province, it's going to be much harder. They are literally nickel-and-diming people out of Ontario. They come up with creative ways to raid our pockets again and again, and yet they use the same old, same old as well, as far as raising taxes on alcohol. But now they're increasing licence fees, textbooks—a 4.3 cents-a-litre gas tax increase. It's really disturbing to see in Ontario.

This is a government that has been in power for 13 years, Mr. Speaker. They have lost touch with the people

that they represent. Unfortunately, we're two years from a change in government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's great to have a few minutes to weigh in on this budget. In my view, this budget has the wrong priorities. It does little or nothing to help the vast majority of people who live in this province. It's a—the new buzzword—"stretch goal" budget. For most Ontarians, things are not changing for the better. It's full of more cuts that are going to stretch household budgets and make it harder, particularly for seniors and families, to stay healthy.

It's a budget, in fact, that was actually tabled before the budget committee even had the ability to write their report and inform the budget after they had travelled to six or seven sites across the province. How disrespectful of MPPs' time and staff time that you wouldn't even wait until that report was tabled to assist you in putting your budget together.

The budget doesn't provide adequate funding to deal with our aging population and our population growth. There are increases of just 1.9% over the last year for health and for long-term care, but it won't keep up with the population growth or the cost of aging. Really, it is a reduction in those budgets. There have been four straight years of freezing of funding for hospitals, and this small increase is not going to enable hospitals to keep up with inflation.

1730

It means that, with inflation, with population growth, with aging, this increase is ultimately a cut to health care; and that that overall 340-something million dollars, at the end of the day, is still, when you look at the 82 or 85 hospital systems across the province, a cut to most of them. We're going to continue to see cuts to nurses, cuts to RPNs, and cuts to other health care professionals in the system that we've been hearing about.

We heard today, actually, about a hospital in my riding, in Welland. There is now a planning proposal to close the fourth hospital in the Niagara region. They closed Fort Erie; then they closed Port Colborne; then they closed Niagara-on-the-Lake; and now they're proposing to actually close Welland. It's unprecedented that a hospital would close in an area that supports 100,000 people in Welland, in Port Colborne, in Wainfleet and in Pelham. Pelham isn't even in my riding, but certainly many people from Mr. Hudak's riding actually use the Welland hospital and the Port Colborne urgent care centre.

Reports in the local newspaper talk about replacing that with a—well, not quite an urgent centre and not quite an emergency, but the reports say that they would be able to stabilize critical patients. But in the next sentence in the report in the local paper, it said that ambulances would not be directed to that facility. I don't know how many critical patients you know are actually going to arrive at a hospital—well, not a hospital anymore. In fact,

they don't know what to call it, because they say it's going to be more—

Ms. Catherine Fife: They're making it up as they go along.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're making it up as they go along. It's not going to be an emergency. It's not going to be an urgent care centre. It's going to be something in between. I can't see people arriving by bus or in a taxi or in a private car who are critical and need to be stabilized. I think that that is just a myth and I don't believe it for one minute.

Locally, we have thousands of people on wait-lists waiting for long-term-care beds. Many of those patients are actually sitting in hospital beds. There's no plan by the Liberal government to actually increase any of the numbers of long-term-care beds in Niagara or anywhere across the province.

I have a friend, Bob, who had some surgery on his leg about two months ago at the St. Catharines hospital—the new hospital in the minister without portfolio's riding. He had the surgery, but he ended up having to remain hospitalized, so they transferred him to the Port Colborne site of the Niagara Health System, where they've got, probably, I don't know, 60 beds open. Half of those beds are people waiting for long-term care and the other are patients requiring rehab, who need to have some slow physiotherapy rehab. Bob actually ended up in the hospital for 60 days after his surgery. What will Bob do when there are no beds left in Port Colborne, there are no beds left in Fort Erie and there are no beds left in Welland? Patients like Bob, who had surgery but can't go home because they need the slow rehab, will have no place to go.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We could set them up here at Queen's Park.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, yes.

I also had the opportunity this week to meet with a lot of seniors in my riding. I went at the request of one of my local residents to meet her father-in-law. We often talk about the five-day home care guarantee that the Liberals actually promised us back in 2012 but that was never delivered. Ann asked me to go and visit with her father-in-law. She'd had the CCAC in and she wanted him to be assessed for a bath. The only thing she wanted was a bath once or twice a week for a 96-year-old man. He'll be 96 on October 24. He has short-term memory loss. He walks with a walker. If he doesn't use the walker, he shuffles.

The Liberals talk a good game about wanting people to remain in their own homes, but this man can't even get one bath. When he had his assessment by the CCAC, they said that if he could shuffle off to the bathroom, to the sink, then he didn't require any care from the CCAC. It is pathetic. The man is incontinent. For those of you who don't know what that word is, he dribbles all the time. So at least that man, based on the fact that he's incontinent, shouldn't be told, "Well, buy some Depends. We're not giving him a bath." The man's 70-year-old daughter-in-law—daughter-in-law, imagine this—has to go in and give this man a bath. He's embarrassed, and

she's embarrassed. I tell you, it's not right. But that's the kind of health care system that we're having delivered by the Liberal government here.

According to the Ontario Nurses' Association, 1,200 nurses have been laid off since January 2015. Today I want to tell the nurses that the Liberal government, in the clause-by-clause on the PTSD bill, voted against nurses being included in the presumptive legislation because, "They have the ability anyway to file a compensation claim, and they don't experience trauma in the same way that first responders do." Well, I can tell you, as a nurse, that nurses experience trauma each and every day that they go to work. I think it's shameful that the Liberals would not include nurses and front-line health care workers in this legislation, and actually have the gall to do it.

These cuts to nursing and cuts to other regulated health professionals and cuts to RPNs—let's get the story straight here. RNs are being replaced by RPNs, who are being replaced by PSWs, who are being replaced by volunteers. Have you seen the ads lately in your local newspapers? They're looking for volunteers in every hospital in the system to go and bring water or apple juice to a patient lying in the hallway in the emergency department or to transfer patients from the emergency room up to their floor.

If you've got a person in the emergency department that needs to be admitted, surely they should have a person with some credentials actually transporting them to their room. I can tell you that just today, I got stuck in this elevator with 10 people here in the Legislature. Imagine being stuck in an elevator in a hospital with a patient, as a volunteer. What's happening is that we're just pushing everybody down in the system.

I want to talk a bit about seniors, because—time goes quickly when you're actually talking—I had an opportunity to visit a number of seniors this week. I was at the Friends Over 55 Recreation Centre in Port Colborne. There were about 100 seniors out there on Saturday morning for breakfast. I was at the Congress of Union Retirees in Hamilton. I met with a large contingent of seniors there. I also met with CARP Niagara at Ina Grafton in the minister without portfolio's riding this week. There were about 60 seniors out there.

I have to tell you, they were very disappointed in the Liberal government, about their failure to consult them about prescription increases. None of them were aware of it until it hit the fan on budget day, and it nearly doubles the cost for some of those seniors.

The most interesting part about it all was, I was quoting some StatsCan figures about what the government collects in income information for seniors. I was quoting the figure of around \$25,000 for a single woman, \$30,000 for a single man and \$50,000 for a couple. I can tell you, I had a barrage of e-mails and phone calls from seniors' centres around Niagara when they heard that information on local radio that day, saying, "Those figures can't be correct. I don't know any single woman

who has an income of \$25,000 a year; none of my friends do." That was the word I heard.

I heard from—Minister Bradley will know—the woman from the West St. Catharines Older Adult Centre, Peggy. She said, "Your numbers have to be wrong, Cindy." So we sent her the information and we said, "Well, now, this is the median." In fact, 50% of the two million seniors who live in this province are lower than that \$25,000 a year for a single senior.

The Liberals told us today and they told us the last time we were here that they thought that \$19,300 was an okay cap—

Mr. Paul Miller: Affluent.

Ms. Cindy Forster: That's an affluent senior. Well, the seniors in Niagara will tell you that they're not rich and that they can't afford to pay more.

1740

Now, when I went to talk to the union of retirees in Hamilton, it was very interesting because a lot of them had some great stories to tell me. I'm going to just share a couple of those with you because I think hearing it exactly from seniors' mouths may make a difference to the government. I hope it will make a difference.

In St. Catharines, CARP Niagara had reported to me that they had surveyed their members with respect to this new budget measure, with respect to the drugs, and 10% of CARP's members who responded to the survey told them that they don't fill their prescriptions on a regular basis because it means either a prescription or it means food. So, 10% of the people who responded; I think that's very telling.

When I went to Hamilton, the seniors who were there talked about the hidden seniors, the fact that there are many seniors living in poverty who we don't know about, who we don't even talk about here as politicians.

Many of them don't have dental coverage. One of the seniors who was there told me his teeth were falling out, but he is living on such a low pension that he can't afford to go and have dental work.

There were also injured workers at this meeting. Some of them are retired injured workers who retired much earlier than they would have liked to and ended up on OW or ODSP. They're still fighting their compensation claims. They have no pension. They talked about the ORPP and they said that the ORPP isn't going to do them any good and it isn't going to do anybody who is on compensation or on disability or on Canada pension disability any good because none of those people will be paying into that pension plan. So for anybody who's really vulnerable and struggling today, it isn't going to help them anyway.

Many seniors are supporting their adult children. Their kids can't get a job because their kids are in that "contemporary mobile employment" that the member from Scarborough talked about. It's that new sexy word for precarious work. So their kids can't get a job, they can't leave home. And in many cases, they're raising their grandchildren, too. Some of them are raising their grandchildren full-time, with the parents of the kids not

even being there, and they're doing this on \$25,000 a year.

Henry, who was at this meeting, told me that he didn't believe that selling off Hydro One was a good thing for seniors. In fact, they've seen their hydro bills increase by 30% over the last year. They need to make a choice now: "Am I going to heat the house or am I going to buy food? Now, am I going to buy my drugs? Am I going to get my prescriptions or buy food or pay the hydro bill?"

They don't believe that it's a fair choice to make and they don't believe that private benefit costs—some of the seniors who retired had benefit plans, like the steelworkers, who have now lost their benefits that, I might add, they negotiated and they gave up wage increases to have those benefit plans in place for a secure retirement. After giving up those wage increases as the alternative to those benefits, they now find they have no benefits.

So some of them are being offered private company benefit plans, but the seniors I met said they're too cost-prohibitive—\$200, \$300 a month minimum, and they escalate each year as you get older, regardless of the usage. So that is a problem for them.

Lena, a USW retiree—actually the member from Stoney Creek probably knows her—told me about a woman who she knows who's on post-chemotherapy drugs, and the injection is \$1,500 a month and it is not covered. She's a senior, and it is not covered in the provincial program. So she has to come up with \$1,500 a month for this drug. So she has to make choices, as well.

Many of the seniors—both there and in St. Catharines—talked about the delisting of drugs off the list, which continues every year to be a problem, and the fact there's a drug shortage and that drug companies aren't being held to account to produce those drugs because they're not profitable anymore, because there are more expensive drugs on the market that they want to sell and they don't want to make those drugs any more. But nobody's talking about how that impacts the seniors in our community.

I also met with Georgina Lebon, who is a former federal employee. She's on the Council of Canadians. She's a federal retiree. She talked about the people she works with on a regular basis. There was one senior man there—this story was very telling. He's still working. He's 65, and he is not in a job that has a pension. So at the end of the day, he's going to be on OAS, CPP and the guaranteed income supplement. He talked about waking up every morning worried, worried every day about how he's going to live at age 65 without any pension. He says, "When I wake up in the morning, I say, 'Fudge, I'm awake; I'd rather be asleep," because he is so worried, day in and day out, about living in poverty in his senior years.

Malcolm Buchanan was at the meeting as well. He's the president of the union retirees. He's a retired teacher. He talked about living very comfortably in his retirement years, because teachers invested 13% or 14% of their income into a pension plan. But we see today, with many

of those public pensions, that the government is trying to negotiate them away, right?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Strip them.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're trying to strip their pensions. They're trying to push them out the door by reducing their retirement benefits. Just this week, someone in my constit office was in and talked about perhaps being forced to retire at the end of this year. Otherwise he'll have retirement benefits, but he'll have to pay somewhere around \$1,600 a year to maintain those benefits.

The seniors said that politicians and budgets need to reflect seniors and their issues. They believe they're constantly being ignored. They built our hospitals, they built our schools, and for the money that they invested into taxes in this province, they should be treated better. They don't think they're being treated very well.

Seniors say that politicians need to be educating youth, particularly youth. They're concerned about the youth. The seniors' story is not being adequately told. They think the youth don't understand how important pensions and benefits actually are, and that we as politicians should be making them aware of that.

As I said, many of them were supporting their grand-children and their children. Many of their health care costs are out of pocket. If they need physio or they need their dentures relined or they need eyeglasses, all of those things are out of pocket, and that's hard to do on \$19,300—

Mr. Paul Miller: That's affluent.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, that's affluent.

It's hard to do on \$25,000 a year, if you're trying to maintain your house.

My last little story is about a guy named Royce. He said that what is really telling to him is that all of his neighbours have moved. He didn't live in an affluent area, he said. All of these people were his friends, and they've all moved because none of them could afford to stay in their houses. They've all moved into apartments. He said, "I miss my neighbours. I look around and there's nobody there anymore." They couldn't, because of the taxes going up and the food going up and the hydro and the water bills going up.

That's the story of seniors in today's world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I was hoping the member for what's going to be called Niagara Centre would have included in her speech some comments about the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, which I know is a favourite topic of hers and a concern of many people in the Niagara Peninsula. I thought I'd get that on the record, that she had expressed concern about that.

Again, I can't believe I was that negative in opposition. Tell me I wasn't, Toby.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Oh, you were.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Oh, he says I was. Okay, I'm sorry.

The opposition obviously has the role of bringing out anything they believe to be negative in the budget, and the government members will talk about the good things.

21 MARCH 2016

I happened to be speaking to a group of student leaders at Brock University—they had come from various places in the province—about the new initiative to reduce the cost of education overall to students in the province—post-secondary education—in an effort to be able to have more of them access it without the paycheque of their parents being the main influence. They were very pleased with the changes that were being made to that particular aspect of their lives. So that was a positive one.

1750

I also keep looking at the uploading that's taking place on an ongoing basis from municipalities. You don't hear that from municipal leaders, by the way. Some of them actually criticized the provincial government for incurring a deficit. Meanwhile, of course, we're incurring the deficit so we can assume more costs that municipalities once had, costs that were forced upon them by the previous Conservative government. I know the member was concerned about that when it happened.

I go back to the last issue—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: He's being negative.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, let me say this first of all: Parties in opposition, like the NDP, speak in a certain way, and that's their role and responsibility. Look at what the NDP does in power when they're faced with the reality of public office, and probably people were critical of them at that time. They should recognize that there is a big responsibility when you actually have to govern the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to my colleague from Welland. She brought a lot of good points to the table. She talked a lot about seniors, and as the critic for seniors, it's something that I certainly am very much paying attention to.

It's been talked about here a lot today, that as many as 92% of Ontarians surveyed said that long-term-care homes are not being staffed to meet the diverse and increasingly acute medical and mental care needs of seniors. Yet there was nothing in that budget to address the 30,000 beds that they promised two elections ago. We know those beds are not even touching what the new need is going to be. There are 24,000 seniors on a waiting list, and they're predicting—by the Ontario Long Term Care Association—that that will double to 50,000 in just six years.

She talked about the cost of drugs and the doubling, almost, of the cost to those seniors, and again a significant challenge to many of them that we're going to have. I had a news conference here last week where we had the Ontario seniors' association and the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors. They were very, very concerned about the im-

21 MARS 2016

pact of this budget on seniors that they so loyally represent.

Mr. Speaker, we talked and the member for Welland talked as well about the debt that this government has incurred: \$12 billion a year. I just want to reiterate for the record: \$12 billion, if we had it in a bank account rather than paying interest payments, could fund a year of long-term care for 222,043 seniors; it could fund 44,120 beds in a palliative care unit for one year; it could fund 40,347 hospital beds for one year; or it could fund 169,052,488 MRI scans.

It's deplorable that this government continues to come out and pat themselves on the back. They're hungry to stay in power. They're going to tell people what they think they want to hear, but the regret is, as an opposition member, that we need to hold them to account because they have run our province into a very challenging fiscal hole.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think the member from Welland brought the debate on health care in the province of Ontario to a very personal level and to a very honest level, because these are the lived experiences of seniors in the province of Ontario.

The privatization of health care continues to be an ongoing and emerging issue. We are seeing it each and every day. My dad right now is in a hospital in Kitchener; he's in St. Mary's hospital. When he was admitted over the weekend, the doctor on call said, "Do you have coverage for medical benefits?" My stepmother still works, and he said, "Well, then if you have benefits, you can get the good blood thinner." I mean, "the good blood thinner"; so there's a more expensive version and then there's a cheap version. But the thing is that we're all the same and we're all supposed to be supporting a universal health care system, and yet for seniors in the province of Ontario, they see their rights as seniors being whittled away. They're living it, so it doesn't really matter what the advertising says.

This government has an advertising issue. The Auditor General has identified that. Even over the last week, we learned that this government paid \$6.2 million in legal fees to sell off Hydro One. This government advertised \$600,000 worth of commercials on the ORPP, so that adds insult to injury to these seniors because they see that they're not going to benefit from it. They see right through this government.

I think that the member from Welland actually identified this very clearly and brought those voices to this place, and that is her job. It isn't about just being an opposition member and about criticizing; it's about bringing the voices of Ontarians to this Legislature, hoping—some of us praying—that you may actually listen to those voices and change this policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd just like to say that I believe this budget is a great budget. At the end of the year, the

\$5.7-billion deficit—we will balance, which is what the opposition has been asking for, and the third party.

There's good news for students. The organized students are very happy about this. The students who were up there today when we were talking about it knew that they weren't to clap. They were clapping their thumbs together. They were, obviously, secondary school students.

The municipalities have asked for more money for infrastructure. We have given over \$300 million to the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.

There is \$30 million for Connecting Links. There's more money for GO services. I know that people in my area are thrilled with that.

There's more money for capital for schools.

There's more money for hospitals. The hospitals asked for an end of the freeze to the budget, and that has happened. There's \$130 million more for cancer care. There's 5% more for home care, which is where we believe people want to be, rather than in a hospital, where it's expensive.

I've heard the opposition talk about heat or eat. The money from cap-and-trade, \$100 million, will go to home retrofits for those people who are spending a lot of money on heating.

There's \$178 million for affordable housing, which we know is needed. It is about time that everybody got on board with this.

Special-needs children will have \$17.8 million more.

Drive Clean has been eliminated. I don't know why people are so upset about that.

I urge you to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments, but the member for Welland can reply.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thanks to all who weighed in on this.

The minister without portfolio talked about me being negative. I don't think that it's negative to actually bring forward constituents'—particularly seniors'—stories on how many challenges they're experiencing just trying to get through a day as a senior.

The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound raised some good points about mental health services, in particular, that are sorely lacking in this budget, and the 30,000 beds and other broken promises while thousands wait on wait-lists across the province.

The member from Kitchener-Waterloo was talking about bringing voices here to Queen's Park. That's what we're elected to do. We're elected to bring forward the voices of the 105,000 or 110,000 people whom we represent.

The member from Barrie can spout all she wants about what a great budget this is, but every ministry is getting a 6% cut, with the exception of health care and community and social services, where the increases are not enough to even talk about.

I'm going to use my last 45 seconds to talk about a senior who has a house in the St. Catharines riding. Her

husband died; he had a pension but it's not that much. She's probably surviving on \$2,500 a month. She would like to sell her house but she doesn't have enough money to actually fix her house to get the best price for that house. So she remains in it without having enough money to actually do the repairs. When you talk about people wanting to remain in their house, well, yes, they do, if they have enough income. But here is a government that actually ended the renovation tax credit

because they said there wasn't enough uptake. There isn't enough uptake because the seniors can't afford to actually front that \$15,000 to get a tax credit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It is 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South-Weston / York-Sud- Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London-Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia-Lambton	· ·
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket-Aurora	1 7 1
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough Sud-Ouest	-
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora-Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham-Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa WestNepean / Ottawa-Ouest- Nepean	- Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby-Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga-Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	AjaxPickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity-Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de
		l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	l'Infrastructure

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener-Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor-Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West-Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest-Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges-Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin-Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa-Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton-Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton-Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga-Brampton South /	
	Mississauga-Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma-Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont Dundas-South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale
		Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East-Stoney Creek /	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /
	Hamilton-Est-Stoney Creek	Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
		Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York-Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent-Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	législative Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth-Wellington	Services gouvernementative et des Services aux consonnitateurs
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches-East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland-Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto-Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga-Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre
		Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	,
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor

Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo Han Dong, Michael Harris Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith

Monique Taylor

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn

Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson

Mike Colle, Grant Crack Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon

Lisa M. Thompson

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins

Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon John Fraser, Wayne Gates

Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha

Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri

Laurie Scott

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren

Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon

Chris Ballard, Steve Clark Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton

Soo Wong

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod

Han Dong, John Fraser

Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi Julia Munro, Arthur Potts

Lou Rinaldi

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French

Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat

Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris

Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker

Jeff Yurek

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns

Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh

Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns

Glenn Thibeault

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch



Continued from back cover	Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
	Ms. Peggy Sattler	8090
Weston Lions Club	Sexual violence and harassment	
Mrs. Laura Albanese	Ms. Daiene Vernile	8091
World Down Syndrome Day	Green power generation	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece8084	Mr. Jim McDonell	8091
Conflict in Ukraine		
Mr. Yvan Baker8084	ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU	LIOUR
Sandvine Inc.	ORDERS OF THE DAT / ORDRE DO	JOOK
Ms. Daiene Vernile8085	2016 Ontario Budget / Budget de l'Ontar	io de 2016
	Mr. Toby Barrett	
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /	Mr. John Vanthof	
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI	Hon. David Zimmer	
	Mr. Rick Nicholls	
Tomato Act, 2016, Bill 179, Mr. Colle / Loi de 2016	Mme France Gélinas	
sur la culture de la tomate, projet de loi 179,	Mr. Toby Barrett	
M. Colle	Ms. Jennifer K. French	
First reading agreed to8085	Mr. Bob Delaney	
Mr. Mike Colle8085		
	Mr. Randy Pettapiece	
STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY	Mme France Gélinas	
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS	Mme Marie-France Lalonde	
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES	Ms. Jennifer K. French	
	Hon. Glen R. Murray	
International Day for the Elimination of Racial	Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	
Discrimination	Mr. Chris Ballard	
Hon. Michael Coteau	Mr. Rick Nicholls	
Mrs. Gila Martow	Ms. Peggy Sattler	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong8087	Mme Marie-France Lalonde	
	Mr. Victor Fedeli	
PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS	Hon. Glen R. Murray	
	Mr. Bill Walker	
Privatization of public assets	Mr. Percy Hatfield	8108
Mr. Bill Walker8088	Mrs. Laura Albanese	8108
Hospital funding	Mr. Randy Pettapiece	
Ms. Cindy Forster8088	Ms. Catherine Fife	8108
Caregivers	Mr. Bill Walker	8109
Ms. Soo Wong8088	Mr. Paul Miller	8109
Hydro rates	Hon. James J. Bradley	8112
Mr. Ted Arnott8089	Mr. Norm Miller	8113
Long-term care	Ms. Catherine Fife	8113
Mme France Gélinas	Mr. Yvan Baker	8113
Lung health	Mr. Paul Miller	8114
Mr. Arthur Potts	Hon. Mario Sergio	8114
Special-needs students	Hon. Liz Sandals	
Mr. Robert Bailey	Mr. Jeff Yurek	
Ontario Drug Benefit Program	Mr. Percy Hatfield	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	Hon. David Zimmer	
Public transit	Mr. Bill Walker	
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	Hon. Liz Sandals	
Health care funding	Mr. Monte McNaughton	
Mr. Rick Nicholls	Mr. Percy Hatfield	
1111 10101 110101010	ATTER I CICY HUMINIGHT	

Mr. John Fraser	8122
Mr. Victor Fedeli	8122
Ms. Catherine Fife	8122
Mr. Monte McNaughton	8123
Ms. Cindy Forster	8123
Hon. James J. Bradley	8126
Mr. Bill Walker	8126
Ms. Catherine Fife	8127
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	8127
Ms. Cindy Forster	8127
Debate deemed adjourned	8128

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 21 March 2016 / Lundi 21 mars 2016

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS		Government anti-racism programs	
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUI	RS	Mr. Granville Anderson	
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	8071	Hon. Michael Coteau	807
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson		Mental health services	
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Mr. Jeff Yurek	
Mr. Rick Nicholls		Hon. Eric Hoskins	807
Hon. Reza Moridi		Aboriginal health care	
Hon. Michael Coteau		Ms. Andrea Horwath	
Mr. Jeff Yurek		Hon. David Zimmer	808
Mr. Granville Anderson		Hon. Eric Hoskins	808
Mme France Gélinas		Climate change	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)		Ms. Sophie Kiwala	
 (()		Hon. David Zimmer	808
ODAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS OF	DALEC	Hospital funding	
ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS O	RALES	Mr. Monte McNaughton	
Air ambulance service		Hon. Eric Hoskins	808
Mr. Patrick Brown	8071	Public transit	
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Ms. Cheri DiNovo	808
Hon. Eric Hoskins		Hon. Steven Del Duca	808
Air ambulance service		Reception	
Mr. Patrick Brown	8072	Mr. Shafiq Qaadri	808
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Decorum in chamber	
Fuition		The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	808
Ms. Andrea Horwath	8073		
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS	1
Government's record		PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUR	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	8074		
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Mr. Ernie Hardeman	808
Hon. Reza Moridi		Mr. Taras Natyshak	808
Public transit		Ms. Cindy Forster	808
Mr. Michael Harris	8075		
Hon. Steven Del Duca.		MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /	
Hospital services		DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉ	S
Ms. Cindy Forster	8075		
Hon. Eric Hoskins		Colorectal cancer	
Farm safety		Mr. Jeff Yurek	808
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	8076	Northern Ontario Hockey Association tour	rnament
Hon. Jeff Leal		Mr. Michael Mantha	808
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn		Patrick Rocca	
Tuition		Mr. Arthur Potts	808
Mr. Lorne Coe	8077	George Leslie Mackay	
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne		Mr. Ernie Hardeman	808
Hon. Reza Moridi		Maya Mikhael	
Ontario Drug Benefit Program		Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	808
Mr. Percy Hatfield	8078		
Hon. Eric Hoskins		Continued on insid	le hack cov
TIOH. LIFE HOURING		Commed on man	- Cuch core







